

A SUMMER IN BRITTANY

BY

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PREFACE.

The country which the following pages are intended to portray is not large in extent, or very important by position. And it may be thought, therefore, that two octavo volumes were hardly needed for its adequate description.

But it must be remembered that the inhabitants of this remote province, though certainly not the only remaining lineal descendants of the ancient Celtic race, yet are by far the most perfectly preserved specimen of it. To the student of man, and his history, the Breton peasantry present an object of observation, as interesting and as suggestive as the fossilized remains of extinct races of organized beings can to the physiologist.

When, therefore, I determined to attempt a description of the country which had so much interested me, I allowed myself what then appeared to me the ample space of two octavo volumes, in the hope of being able to present to my reader a full-length portrait of the Breton peasant, in all his different varieties, and marked by all those peculiarities of habits, manners, modes of thinking, dress, &c., which distinguish him from the peasants of any other race.

But I cannot flatter myself that I have done this completely. As I advanced in the composition of my picture, I found that the canvass I had deemed so ample was far from sufficient for my purpose. I have been compelled to hurry over many districts, which I wished to describe more completely, and to omit many details which I should have preferred giving to the reader at length.

I trust, nevertheless, that the following pages will not altogether fail in their intention. If the picture is not so finished as I could wish, the more strongly marked linea-

ments are at least given—and with fidelity. And I shall not be disappointed if I shall be found to have awakened a curiosity, which my volumes are not sufficient fully to satisfy.

Among the variety of books which have assisted me in conceiving and in describing the Breton character and peculiarities, I would particularize that of M. Souvestre — "Les Derniers Bretons." Without some clue, such as that which his work afforded me, I should frequently have been at a loss to find my way — so to speak — to many interesting but hidden recesses of Breton character, or to understand rightly much of that which every traveller must see.

The reader will perceive that I have not scrupled to avail myself of his assistance in many instances; and, at the same time that I acknowledge my obligations to him, I would bear testimony to his intimate knowledge of the people he describes. But I would warn those who read "Les Derniers Bretons" as an accurate account of Britanny and its inhabitants, that they should remember that the

tone of that work has been adapted by its author to the Parisian taste; and that the couleur-de-rose hue of a poetic temperament has reflected its tints on facts and circumstances, which to a more matter-of-fact observer might not appear to stand out in so romantically strong relief from the ordinary monotony of every-day life as it exists in other countries.

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A SUMMER IN BRITANNY.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE following pages are the result of two visits to the country they attempt to describe. The first was confined within the limits (all too narrow!) of a six weeks' ramble. The second occupied the summer months of 1839.

Britanny has been very little visited; less, perhaps, than any other part of France. But one of the results of my excursions there is a conviction that this neglect has been caused by its remote and isolated position, rather than from any lack of objects of great and varied interest to the tourist.

Its population is by far the most perfectly preserved specimen, which remains to us of

that old Celtic race, which once possessed the whole of Western Europe; and the inhabitants of its remote towns and secluded villages are not only remarkable from the singular degree in which they have preserved their primeval manners, habits, superstitions, and modes of thought, unchanged by contact with another race, but are, to us especially, interesting from the very curious connexion, in many respects, which exists between them and the inhabitants of our own western and southern coasts.

The sombre and romantic character, too, of the country itself, the traditions of its gloomy and legend-stored history, and the mysterious interest which attaches itself to those stupendous, though barbaric monuments, so frequent throughout the lower province, all conspire to arouse curiosity and excite the imagination.

"Dans cette vielle Armorique," writes a recent author, on the antiquities of his country, "où la civilisation est restée de beaucoup en arrière, où les innovations ne peuvent que difficilement parvenir, se retrouvent avec ces pierres sacrées rongées de mousse et chargées de siècles, les traditions, les mœurs, la langue, même le costume de ces Celtes, tige primitive de tant de nations actuelles, et que les plus

anciens historiens de l'antiquité qualifiaient eux-mêmes dès lors de l'épithète de *vieux*.

"Depuis des milliers d'années le sol presqu'inculte de la basse Bretagne n'a pour ainsi dire pas changé d'aspect. C'etait, du temps des Druides, de sombre forêts, de vastes bruyères, des rocs sourcilleux, de profonds ravins, des rivages inaccessibles; c'est encore aujourd'hui la même chose."

My curiosity, thus excited, was so much gratified, and yet so little satisfied, by my first short trip in 1837, that I determined, at some future opportunity, to devote a sufficient time to a thorough examination of the country.

I had become aware that the only mode by which this could be done satisfactorily was by discarding all other equipage than the staff and knapsack. This humble but independent mode of travelling is, in truth, the only means of becoming really acquainted with any country. But it is more especially the case in one where communications are unfrequent and imperfect, and where the grand routes and great towns are very far from affording a true specimen of the real mass of the population.

"Ce n'est," observes M. Souvestre in his work on the present state of the Bretons, "qu'en s'écartant des routes fréquentées, en

se lançant à pied à travers nos chemins creux, en traversant de pierre en pierre les cascades de nos ruisseaux sans pont, ou les fondrières de nos marécages, que l'on peut arriver aux cantons isolés dans lesquels se retrouvent encore les traditions locales, et les croyances du pays. Là aussi, et là seulement, le peintre peut rencontrer la sauvage et saisissante majesté d'une nature vierge de toute trace moderne, entremêlée partout de ruines druidiques, religieuses, et féodales, qui s'y trouvent, comme les pages éparses d'une histoire oubliée."

It was in the manner here recommended, therefore, that I determined to see Britanny and its inhabitants.

This project I put in execution last summer; and so much pleased was I in all respects with my three months' wanderings, that I much wish I could tempt any of those among my ubiquitous countrymen, who are every year in search of some new touring-ground, to follow my example.

To any, who may be disposed to do so, the relation of my "experiences" may, I hope, prove useful; and, I confess, I am tempted to believe that some account of a country so little known and so singular as Britanny may be not unamusing to the general reader.

I am aware that readers and writers are frequently of different opinions upon this point, but how far this unfortunate discrepancy may exist in the present instance can only be ascertained by experiment.

CHAPTER II.

Choice of Route—Ingouville Hill—Havre—American Vessels—Graville—Harfleur—Tancarville—Norman Driving—Protestants—Lillebonne—The Roman Theatre—The Castle—Walk to Caudebec.

In company with a friend, whom I had persuaded to be the companion of my excursion, I steamed from Southampton to Havre. But if Britanny only be a tourist's object, he might pass from Southampton to Jersey, and thence to St. Malo or to Granville.

We wished, however, to have a peep at Normandy, and its river, and its churches. But as Normandy, and its river, and its churches, have been as much visited and written on as Britanny has been neglected, I shall pass rapidly over that part of my journey.

The Camilla left Southampton pier at one o'clock P. M., and we walked out of her, on Havre quay, at three o'clock the next morning,

the worse for nothing but the bugs, of which the Camilla carries a mighty nation.

To go to bed at three o'clock on a fine midsummer morning was quite out of the question. To get any breakfast, or to pass our knapsacks at the douane, was equally impossible. So we quickly decided that a walk to the top of the hill we saw above us, overlooking the town, would be the best mode of employing the hours till breakfast could be had. Accordingly, we traversed the town and the fauxbourg of Ingouville, and began to mount a steep hill-side, amidst pretty houses and terraced gardens, whose comfortable appearance and delightful situation plainly proclaimed them to be the dwellings of Englishmen.

So favourite a residence has it become for those who expatriate themselves in search of claret and brandy, duty free, that the side of the hill which overlooks the high road between Havre and Graville is being cut into terraces, in preparation for new rows of houses and gardens. The land here has risen in value, during the last twenty years, with wonderful rapidity.

The situation of those houses especially, which are more immediately above the town, is, indeed, one of no common attraction.

The town itself, with its basins and shipping, mingling with roofs, not red with tiles, or bright blue with slates, but of stone, whose varied and subdued tints make the generality of continental towns so much pleasanter objects to look down on than our own — the broad bosom of the Seine, with its passing and repassing crowd of vessels, bounded on the opposite side by the wooded heights of Harfleur—the sea, studded with white-sailed fishing-boats, and then, in the far distance, the dim coasts of Lower Normandy—all contribute to produce for the dwellers on the hill of Ingouville as pleasing a prospect as the eye can rest on.

We stood for some time gazing on the scene as it was progressively illuminated by the sun rising behind us; but when at length he poured down his full flood of light upon the town, lighting up its gray roofs, and making it look the most cheerful place in the world, we began to think what a pleasant thing it would be to be sitting at breakfast at some one of those windows we could see glancing in the sun. No time was lost in attaining a consummation so devoutly to be wished. We forthwith commenced our descent, meditating, as we stepped along at five miles an hour, on café au lait in huge cups,

unnumbered shrimps, and petits pains by the dozen.

Nor did our deeds fall far short of such mighty threatenings; and great was the marvelling of the garçons, at the Hotel de Londres, at the repeated "encores" with which we honoured all the component parts of a very excellent breakfast. But when, at length, the last cup of coffee was finished, and the last fragrance of the cigar, which followed it, dissipated, there was yet some time to elapse before the business of the day would commence at the douane. And this we employed in ascertaining, that beyond the usual attractions of a pretty, thriving, busy, bustling town and port, Havre has very little to interest or detain a traveller.

One very queer-looking tower there is, standing at the entrance of the harbour, which, for aught I know, may be highly interesting to the architectural antiquary. It is studded all over with little bosses, standing out in high relief from the stone, which, at a short distance, make it look like a tower remarkably disfigured with the small-pox.

Before the revolution, the commerce of Havre with the colonies of France amounted to more than three hundred millions of francs, says Goube, in his History of the Duchy,

of which St. Domingo produced by far the greatest part. Almost all the elements of this prosperity were swept away by that tremendous storm; and for a while it seemed that the commercial importance of Havre was gone for ever. Within the last few years, however, new prospects and richer hopes have been opened to her, and her basins are, at the present day, well thronged, and her quays never idle. A walk round the various docks is quite sufficient to show that, to its commerce with the United States Havre must owe its present and future commercial wealth and importance. But nearly all the tall and trim vessels, which declare this fact so plainly, are Americans.

I entered into conversation with the mate of one of them, and, among other things, asked him in what work the hands were then engaged.

"In getting out the cargo, when we can get the lazy devils here to attend to us," said he.

"Ah," said I, "you'd show them the way on your side of the water to clear a vessel and send her to sea again in less time than you have been here."

"I should hope so," was the reply; "or at Liverpool either for that matter," he added, returning the compliment. "Why, last trip,

we had cleared and got our lading at Liverpool before we had been there as long as we have been here already, and we have not half discharged our cargo yet."

By the time we had finished our walk round the basins, the slow douaniers, whom I had left my American friend heartily anathematizing, were ready to commence operations. So we proceeded to the Custom-house, and after a vast deal of noise and bustle, and very little real examination, we got possession of our small effects, and in a quarter of an hour more were jogging along in a char-à-banc towards Tancarville.

As we passed beneath the curious old church of Graville, our driver did not fail to inform us that it was " bati par les Anglais de milliers d'années passées." This is the universal popular creed in this part of the country respecting nearly all the churches. It is well worth any one's while, be he architecturally curious or otherwise, to leave his conveyance in the road, and mount the steep on which this little church is built. Before the revolution it was conventual, and some remains of the monastic buildings are at present used as the *mairie.* But part of the site of the convent is now an unoccupied space, from which there is a lovely view of the river and its wooded banks.

Should you, however, be architecturally inclined, dear reader, you have indeed a treasure at Graville. Hear Mr. Turner, in his letter-press accompaniment to Cotman's splendid work. "The end of the north transept will in point of interest scarcely yield to any other building in Normandy. The row of sculpture immediately above the windows is probably UNIQUE." There!

We next passed Harfleur, having bestowed the deserved tribute of admiration on the elegant and highly-wrought steeple of its old church — all that Harfleur has now to detain anybody. The upstart Havre has taken from it all its glory and importance, merely because it happens to be nearer to the sea. See what a thing it is to be in luck's way! Old Harfleur however is still garrulous of better days, and has its tale to tell of struggles with the English, of sieges stoutly withstood, and reprisals boldly made;—all the particulars and stirring circumstances whereof old Monstrelet will tell you, if you are curious thereanent.

But, if you care not for such musty matters, and love rather the bright and sunny present, be sure to turn round when you get to the top of the hill beyond Harfleur. Thence shall you see the quiet little town and its steeple, and the river and its banks, and Harfleur and

its hill in the distance; and immediately beneath you, to the left of the road, as pretty a green valley as the pays de Caux has to show; —and that is saying no little.

At St. Romain we turned, from the high road to the right, towards the river; and after passing an abandoned village church, which will shortly be a picturesque ruin, and the pretty wood-embosomed village of La Cerlangue, soon found ourselves traversing the glades of the small forest, which skirts the river, by the most romantically bad road possible. A steep descent brought us to a narrow valley, through which a nameless stream finds its way to the river; and in five minutes more a turn in the road showed us the old towers of Tancarville, still rearing their battered walls above the surrounding forest, on an eminence to the right of the valley. On the opposite side is a hill, higher than that on which the castle stands, but unclothed with trees.

We forthwith proceeded to mount the path, which, winding up the ascent, soon placed us before the principal entrance to the castle. The massive round towers which flank this gateway have withstood the injuries of time and of man better than any other part of the building; and they have been selected as the subject of one of Mr. Cotman's plates.

It is a picturesque and striking spot; and we paused awhile before the old gateway, picturing to ourselves the gay and sparkling cavalcades which had passed from those crumbling walls to the tournament or the chase — the returning palmer or wandering trouvère, who had arrived before them to claim their ever-ready hospitality — or the iron-clad followers of some hostile baron, who had vainly sought to surprise the lord of Tancarville in his stronghold. The dark old towers frowned their defiance as grimly on us as ever; and the stout oak door, though the worms and the rot had eaten into his strength and left him little better than a wreck, still made some show of resistance with his thickly studded nails and enormous hinges; but we obtained entrance unchallenged into the fortress of the hereditary chamberlains of the dukes of Normandy by lifting a latch, and found ourselves in a spacious court, surrounded by five ruined towers, and the remains more or less considerable of the walls, which had united them.

On the western side of the court and opposite to the gateway is a mass of sufficiently ugly modern building, which has been used as a barrack at different times since the revolution. That one of the five towers which is

nearest to the river is called the eagle's tower; but I am sorry to say that I am unprovided with any interesting historical anecdote to show the origin of so romantic an appellation. Its present tenant, the old woman, who discharges the functions of warder of the castle, and of the cow which grazes in the court, knew nothing about it.

Dr. Dibdin, in speaking of Tancarville, calls it the castle of the Montmorencies; on which Mr. Turner observes that he knows not on what authority he does so, and that he never heard it so styled in Normandy. He goes on to give a very succinct account of the descent of the property down to the year 1718, in which certainly no Montmorenci figures. But it is equally certain that the castle was in the possession of some member of that family at the period of the revolution; and the old portress told us that her husband had seen six cart-loads of records removed at that time by the Montmorenci family from a little vaulted chamber under the eagle's tower. In undeniable and triumphant proof of all which facts, she showed us the identical little vaulted chamber still existing in statu quo.

The towers which form the gateway are called "Tours des prisonniers;" and in one of them we saw the cells, which had confined the

unfortunates, who had dared to make themselves obnoxious to the lords of Tancarville. These dungeons of the feudal strongholds in the days when might made right always seem to me to speak more strongly to the imagination, and to call up in the mind a more living picture of those iron times, than any other of the traces they have left behind them.

Strangely fashioned in the massive masonry which supports the tower, these cells, which we entered by making two or three sharp turns in a passage just large enough for one person to pass, resemble excavations made in living rock, rather than a chamber in a building;—so utterly impossible was it for sound or evidence of any kind that a human being was there immured to pass to the world without. The walls were covered with rude carving, with which the inmates had sought to beguile the tedious hours. I did not perceive any writing among the variety of devices which I examined, but some there were by which the sentiment of the prisoner might be guessed;—such as the Fleur de Lys, very frequently repeated—a heart pierced with an arrow, and a variety of escutcheons.

At the base of another of the towers called the lion's tower, there are other and more capacious dungeons; but these, as our con-

ductress told us, had been walled up time out of mind. In another, called the square tower, and said to be the oldest part of the building, there are traces of fresco painting on the walls. A variety of shields with their proper blazon, which seem to have been painted in a row, and to have formed a sort of border, remained in the best preservation, or rather were the least obliterated.

The fifth tower is the highest remaining part of the building, and makes a very picturesque object as seen amid the forest from the valley below. As I was about to enter the walls of it, our cicerone caught me by the shoulder and pointed to a large stone which had fallen from its place in the half-remaining vaulted roof, and hung most threateningly suspended at a great height above our heads. It looked as if a breath or the vibration of a voice would have brought it down; but she said that it had remained precisely as we saw it for the last two years; but that she expected nevertheless that it would come down every day, and she did not like to see any one go under it.

If the river were a more pleasing object at this spot, the view from Tancarville castle would be a delightful one; but a large extent of marsh and sand, uncovered at low water,

which stretches itself at the base of the cliffs, on which the castle stands, detracts greatly from the general beauty of the landscape. It is just at this point that the Seine enlarges itself to a wide estuary; and it is between this part of the river and the sea that those dangers in the navigation are experienced, which have given a celebrity to the little town of Quillebœuf, on the bank immediately opposite.

To the same cause Havre owed its ominous name of "Havre des Malheurs," till it changed it for its present more auspicious appellation.

When we at length turned our backs on Tancarville, and descended to the little *auberge* in the hamlet at the mouth of the stream above mentioned, we found there our driver and Norman pony, ready to proceed to Lillebonne.

But in the first place there was a most desperate hill to be ascended by a most impracticable road. So we set off to mount it on foot, with much misgiving whether our little horse would ever succeed in dragging the empty vehicle to the top. He was a very good one, however, like most of his compatriots; and his master was evidently very fond of him, though he poured out on him without ceasing every inconceivable sort of

abuse, now calling him a "Sacré mechanique," and now a "cochon du diable," till they contrived—he as much out of breath as his nag—to get the carriage up the hill between them.

A short and pretty drive brought us to Lillebonne about five o'clock. From the hill above the town, the view of it, and of the valley in which it is situated, is delightful—as green and as rich-looking almost as England. The valley too is well studded with respectable and comfortable-looking dwellings—the residences of the thriving manufacturers of Bolbec, a little town situated on the upper or more northern of the two roads from Havre to Rouen. I was told that almost all the rich people in this part of the country—and there are many—were protestants. Our driver added that he was one; but that *he did not let it be known at Havre.*

At Lillebonne, having discharged our voiturier, our first care was to demolish a "litre" of fine rough Norman cider; our second—proh pudor!—to visit the Roman theatre, which has lately been laid open there.

These discoveries have put beyond a doubt the fact, that the present Lillebonne occupies the site of the Roman Juliobona, which Ptolemy tells us was the capital of the

Caletes, a people classed by Cæsar (Com. lib. 7. cap. 8.) among the tribes of Armorican race. Their name came from that of their metropolis "Caletum," which Cæsar utterly destroyed, "*because the inhabitants defended it too obstinately.*" It should seem that his new fortress, Juliobona, was erected on the site of the ruined town; so that the present Lillebonne is the third town built on the same soil by three successive races.

Truly, your heroes are sad destructives.

Ordericus Vitalis, who wrote in the twelfth century the history of the dukes of Normandy, says that Cæsar himself built this fortress, and called it, after the name of his daughter, "Julia-bona;" and he ridicules the ignorance, which, in his time, had corrupted the name to the barbarous word "Illebona." The number of Roman roads, branching off from Lillebonne in various directions, and the medals and other relics of antiquity discovered there, show it to have been, under the Romans, a place of considerable importance. An interesting "Notice Archéologique sur le pays de Caux," by M. Mangon de Lalande, printed in the third volume of the Memoirs of the Society of Antiquaries of Normandy, is well worth the perusal of those who love to trace the footsteps of the "universal conquerors."

The remains of the theatre were laid open, as they are now seen, at the expense of the local government, some years since, under the superintendence of M. Rever, who has published a very satisfactory "memoire" on the Roman antiquities at Lillebonne, and the theatre more especially. Notwithstanding the injuries done by the monks of St. Wandrille, who, in the eighth century, carried materials hence for the construction of their abbey, a very perfect notion of the arrangements of a Roman theatre, and of their mode of building, might be formed from the remains at Lillebonne. The building was constructed, as Vitruvius recommends, partly on the slope of a hill; so that the only portion which was on level ground is the scene and the orchestra. In some parts, the cut stone seats, raised tier above tier on the side of the hill, remain in perfect preservation. The walls are built of uncut stone and mortar, faced in the inside with small blocks of tufa, all cut to the same size of from four to five inches square.

The crypt of Glastonbury Abbey is built of the same light and extremely cellular stone. No better material could possibly be found for the construction of a cellar; for, from the quantity of fixed air contained in this stone, it is a very perfect non-conductor. If it were

adopted by the monks of Glastonbury with a view to the well-being of the Abbot's choice wine, they certainly shewed themselves masters of the subject.

There can be no doubt that further excavations at Lillebonne would discover more perfectly the entire form and proportions of the theatre. And the antiquities which have been found from time to time at different spots in the commune, make it probable that other buildings, or at least some of the foundations of the old Roman city, might be brought to light. Juliobona, however, seems to have been one of those towns entirely ruined at the time of the irruption of the Northmen. Under the Norman dukes it in some measure recovered its former dignity; for many of them, and especially William the Conqueror, made it a favourite residence.

Like almost every other town and village of this storied land, Lillebonne has its page of history — its reminiscences of stirring events, and its associations with proud names. It was here that William, in the year 1066, called his nobles together to develop to them his plan for the invasion of England, and to obtain their concurrence and support in the enterprize. History has preserved the names of twenty-one, who were present at this me-

morable council. They may be found in Goube's History of the Duchy.

Lillebonne was one of the earliest seats of the Harcourts—a name prominent during the whole of Norman history. The remains of their castle are still standing on an eminence, well chosen for commanding the town and valley; and they add much to the picturesque beauty of the place. The donjon must, from the description M. Rever gives of it, have been a noble tower; but it is no more. Various antiquaries, and some too of high reputation, have mistaken these remains of the middle ages for Roman buildings; demonstrating thereby how completely a preconceived system may blind the most practised eyes to palpable objects before them. M. Rever shows, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that the walls in question were the work of Norman builders.

Those who delight in feudal reminiscences and middle-age lore, may find in the histories of the period, especially in Masseville, a true and particular account of the vicissitudes these old walls have seen, and their captures and recaptures by English and French over and over again.

We left Lillebonne at six in the evening, and enjoyed much a cool and very pretty

walk to Caudebec, a little town occupying one of the most lovely spots on the northern bank of the Seine. We observed frequently, during our walk, a considerable quantity of small round brown cakes, ranged in rows against the cottage-walls to dry in the sun, and were for a long time unable to conjecture what they might be, and what their destination, till our curiosity was at length satisfied by the information, that they were the refuse of the apple, from which cider had been pressed, and that they were thus made up into cakes and dried for fuel.

We marched down the long steep hill, which brought us to Caudebec, and to the river, just as the twilight was leaving us, and could only see that Caudebec looked a very old, very prettily wood-surrounded, and interesting little town.

After some poking about through the narrow streets in the increasing darkness, we got into a comfortable inn on the quay ; and were not sorry to find ourselves housed, with every prospect of a satisfactory supper and bed.

CHAPTER III.

Caudebec — Its Church — Jumièges — Its Historian — The Abbey — Tradition respecting Agnes Sorel — The War of the Sturgeon — Abbot Philip's Reform—How to find a Drowned Body — The Loup Vert — Parish Church at Jumièges — Gargantua's Seat — St. Georges de Boscherville — Dinner in a Cabaret — Sunday in a Norman Village—The Abbey of Boscherville—Walk to Rouen — View of the City.

A NIGHT spent in a berth on board the Camilla, followed by a day commencing at three A.M., and including in it all the seeings and doings related in the last chapter, made our last night's bed right welcome. But we were on foot this morning by five, climbing a steep and rough path through the woods above Caudebec. By this expedition we gained a delightful morning's walk, through some pretty sylvan scenery, — and a huge appetite for breakfast; but we did not gain that which we went to seek — a view of the town, and the river, and the valley. One pretty peep of the river, at some distance below the town, we did get; but the wood was

too thick and too high to permit us to catch a glimpse of the town.

The church was our next object. It is a remarkably handsome one in the flamboyant style, and full of interesting morsels of architecture and art, both inside and outside. The building is of the richest workmanship of the most ornate period of the art; and the amount of genius, expense, time, and labour, which has been lavished on this church in a small country town, is a pregnant theme for speculation on the moral changes society has undergone since this and similar piles were raised.

Are we in reality progressing towards the perfection of *moral* and physical well-being as rapidly and as surely in all respects as we think, and loudly say, we are?

If you "would view aright" the fair prospect which is to be seen from the top of Caudebec church tower, "go visit it," as we did, when a glorious rising sun is lighting up each fretted pinnacle of the wonderfully wrought fabric, and all the quaint irregularities of the roofs below, while its beams are dancing on the river, and flinging their broad light over the vast forest of Brotonne, which stretches far out of sight beyond it.

A sweet spot is Caudebec; and the judicious

expenditure of about twenty thousand pounds might produce there such a house and grounds, with such shady sylvan walks, such sunny lawns, such home views, and such distant views, as Capability Brown never dreamed of, and the most highly coloured description Mr. Robins ever penned could not adequately extol.

I could have passed a week at Caudebec, if I had had many weeks to dispose of; but as this was not the case, we left it at seven o'clock in one of those little cross-country conveyances which, not aspiring to the dignified title of "diligence," modestly call themselves "voitures commissionaires." This was bound to the little town of Duclair, and conveyed us to that point of the road which is nearest to the ruins of the royal Abbey of Jumièges. Thence a short hour's stroll brought us to the village, where, deeming that our visit to the old Abbey could be more conveniently deferred than our breakfast, we devoted our first cares to the latter.

In the little auberge we met the author of a volume on the Abbey—a Monsieur C. A. Deshayes. He appeared to be residing there; for when, in pursuance of the directions of a placard exhibited on the wall, we applied to him for a copy of his work, he went for it to

a little room, which had the appearance of being his permanent dwelling. There are two persons of the same name, members of the Society of Antiquaries of Normandy, but I know not whether the historian of Jumièges be one of them. After breakfast, we proceeded, with his work in our hands, to explore the ruins, and found it a very satisfactory guide.

Perhaps in all Normandy, rich as it is in sites of historical, architectural, and picturesque interest, there is no one spot which possesses such manifold and varied claims to attention as Jumièges. Accordingly, it has been described and redescribed. But most of those who have written on Jumièges have viewed it with architectural eyes, and have written accordingly. It is, indeed, in this point of view, a most interesting subject; exhibiting, as it does, not only a series of specimens of different *ascertained* dates, but also many curious singularities.

Mr. Turner, in his work on Normandy, published in 1820, speaks feelingly of the barbarous destruction of the ruins then going on under his eyes; and he anticipates the total disappearance of them in a few years. But Jumièges has at last found an owner, who duly appreciates his possession,

and has effectually stayed the work of demolition. The buildings have, nevertheless, in some respects, suffered since Mr. Turner's visit; especially by the loss of the conical roof of one of the western towers. Its fellow, however, still remains to gratify the architectural antiquary. But to those who with unscientific eyes admire the old walls and crumbling towers as objects of picturesque beauty, and as food for imagination and contemplation, the crowd of historic facts and varied memories attached to Jumièges are its chief charm.

All the world knows the romantic tale of Agnes Sorel, Charles the Seventh's mistress, and the history of her residence at Jumièges, and the not altogether monastic vows, for the utterance of which Charles sought this holy retreat. But the admirers of a true love-tale will be sadly shocked to hear that local tradition, totally regardless of the comparatively decent reputation poor Agnes has contrived to leave behind her, tells malicious tales of certain walks on the river bank with one Bertrand, a monk of the abbey; whereat the loyal morality of the people on the other bank was so shocked, that they used to assemble for the purpose of hooting at the beautiful Agnes and her supplementary lover:

in testimony of all which, a spot on the bank of the river opposite to Mesnil, her residence, is pointed out, which most unquestionably does, to the present day, bear the strange name of "Huclerie," or "Jolerie," which words signify a place of hooting or mocking.

Many a tale, however, both grave and gay, may be found among the written and oral records of Jumièges, without insulting the ghost of poor Agnes.

The war which Abbot Robert d'Etalan and his monks waged with the inhabitants of Quillebœuf, during many years, about the middle of the thirteenth century, concerning an unlucky sturgeon, wants but a Homer to rival the tale of Troy.

"Longa est injuria, longæ ambages, sed summa sequar fastigia rerum." The Abbot, it seems, claimed all the "royal fish" caught in a certain part of the river. And for many a mile round Jumièges no layman ever dreamed of aspiring to eat stûrgeon; till, one fateful day, some evil-minded inhabitants of Quillebœuf, not having the fear of the church before their eyes, refused to give up to the servants of the abbot one which they had caught on their own shores. Not more deadly wrath raged in the breast of Achilles, when deprived of his Briseis, than took pos-

session of the Abbot when he learned the sacrilegious detention of his sturgeon. In vain the elders of the village, aghast at the impious crime, caused their erring townsmen, with many lowly apologies, to restore the fish! The outraged and insulted prelate seized five of the offenders and thrust them into his prisons at Jumièges—a punishment, which those who have seen these said prisons will think might suffice for a graver offence than that of trespassing on his reverence's seignoral rights. "Tantæne animis monachensibus iræ!" Then in one mass arose the men of Quillebœuf, and surrounded the abbey, behaving in so outrageous a manner that it seemed probable that even the Abbot's sacred person would not have been safe from their violence, if they could have caught him. The walls and towers of the monastery would, unquestionably, says the historian, have fallen on their accursed sacrilegious heads, and have overwhelmed them, were it not that unfortunately the holy inhabitants themselves would, in that case, have been left roofless.

The contest raged long with various fortune; but the final result — shocking to say! —was most disastrous to the Abbot; for the war of the sturgeon, after having been brought

before the tribunal of both pope and king, ended by bringing, even in the thirteenth century, so much ridicule upon the monastery, that the monks drove Robert d'Etalan from his dignity.

One other story from the annals of Jumièges is so strikingly characteristic of the strange state of things at the period to which it refers, that I must tell it, at the risk of making my notes on Jumièges somewhat more lengthy than I had intended.

When Philip of Luxembourg was named Abbot of Jumièges, in 1511, he found the monks living a very irregular and unmonastic sort of life. His flock, it seems, amounted to thirty; of whom ten, at his earnest exhortations, promised to reform their lives. The remaining twenty flatly refused to make any alteration whatever in their conduct, telling the Abbot that they were very well pleased with their lives as they were, and declaring that if certain little carnal indulgences were not winked at, they could not see for their parts what they gained by being monks at all.

The good Abbot, therefore, much scandalized at so erroneous an estimate of the advantages of monastic vows, resolved to introduce into his monastery a body of new monks from another convent under his rule; an ino-

culating sort of process, which he trusted would be attended with good effects. Now the method he adopted to bring about his object was in this wise. He caused the new colony to arrive at Jumièges during the night of the first Monday in Lent, 1515, when they were secretly introduced into the church, and hidden in a closet near the door. Here they remained till the hour of vespers; and then, while the old monks were convivially engaged at table—a specimen of their mode of living—they sallied forth into the church, and forthwith commenced chanting the evening service most energetically. Abbot Philip had flattered himself that the reprobate scamps would have been awed into sudden submission and repentance by his cleverly devised coup de théâtre. But, instead of that, they rose from their cups, dashed pell-mell into the church to see who they were who were performing their duties for them, and, not at all approving of these self-appointed proxies, began to assume an exceedingly unclerical attitude. The abbot now produced an order for the reception of the new comers, and called upon the ten, who had promised to amend their lives, to stand by him, and assist in bringing about the reform. But they one and all excused them-

selves, on the plea that the opposite party were too numerous; and the worthy abbot narrowly escaped being maltreated in the melée.

Eventually, the parliament of Normandy took cognizance of the rebels, and caused the establishment of the reformed discipline. But we are told, that after all the old monks obstinately refused to submit to the new regulations, and after having excited tumults so violent that those concerned in them were branded on the hand by the parliament of Rouen, they left the monastery, and went to carry out their ideas of the advantages of monkery elsewhere.

All this seems strangely at variance with stories of monks imprisoned for life for breach of monastic vows—instances of which are still traditionally related of this same abbey by the people of Jumièges. It proves how entirely the whole internal state of these establishments must have varied according to the general complexion of the times and the character of their rulers.

The inhabitants of the peninsula, formed by the river at Jumièges, have the character of being particularly superstitious, and some customs are still in use among them, which must have descended from a high antiquity.

Take, for example, their receipt for finding the body of a person lost in the river— a circumstance of no unfrequent occurrence. A wax taper, which has been duly blessed, is fixed on a plank, and then lighted and committed to the current. The discovery of the corpse is then easy; for, say the people of Jumièges, the candle never fails to remain stationary precisely over the spot where it lies beneath the waves.

But the most remarkable custom existing at Jumièges is that of observing yearly a partly religious, partly jocose, and, probably, partly pagan ceremony, termed the "Procession du Loup Vert." On every 23rd of June, a sort of club — one of those religious "confréries" so common in Roman Catholic parishes — assemble at the house of one of their members, who bears the title of "Loup Vert." Every man carries in his hat an image of St. John, whose fête they are celebrating, while the Loup Vert is arrayed in a huge green cloak, and a conical rimless cap of the same colour. Thus accoutred, he places himself at the head of his brethren, and they march, amid the firing of guns and blowing of horns, &c., to a spot close to the walls of the abbey called "Le Chouquet."

Here M. le Curé, with all his ecclesiastical honours, choristers with censers, cross-bearers, banner-bearers, &c., meets the procession, and, leading them to the church, there performs vespers. At the conclusion of the service they return to the house of the Loup Vert to a maigre supper. At the end of the day a log is lighted, to which the procession, arranged as before, and, once more starting from the house of the Loup Vert, repairs, singing hymns as they march. When they have arrived at the fire, and finished their hymns, they take hold of each other's hands, and thus, forming a long string, run round the fire after the person who is to be Loup Vert the succeeding year. He is not deemed, however, duly and regularly constituted such till he shall have been thrice seized by one of the vacant hands at either end of the file of his pursuers. Meanwhile, the future Loup is armed with a good switch, which he has the privilege of exercising on the old Loup and his comrades. When at length he has been caught the prescribed number of three times, a certain chant is sung, which is somewhat in contrast with the religious nature of part of the ceremony. It is indeed so much so, that I shall content myself with transcribing the first stanza only.

"Voici le Saint Jean
L'heureuse journée
Que nos amoureux
Vont a l'assemblée.
Marchons, joli cœur,
La lune est levée," &c.

Another procession, on the following day, and a mass, at the conclusion of which the old Loup Vert puts two little bells — the insignia of his dignity—*on the steps of the altar*, whence the new Loup takes them, closes the ceremony.

Every body who visits Jumièges is so much engrossed by the ruins of its royal Abbey, that few have noticed its curious little parish church. Part of it has the appearance of great antiquity ; and I was struck with a peculiarity of which I have met one or two instances since, but which was then new to me. From the west end to the altar, the floor rises in a regular and very considerable slope. The effect of thus looking up hill to the altar is strange ; but the arrangement is not a bad one for a religion in which the principal part of the service performed at the altar is for the eyes rather than for the ears.

We left Jumièges about one o'clock, on one of the few really summer days that 1837 could boast, to walk to St. Georges de Boscherville, a village about two leagues short of Rouen.

A pretty path through the forest brought us to the bank of the river, and to the high road, near the little town of Duclair. Thence we followed the course of the stream for a short distance, passing under some white cliffs, which really seemed to reflect a white heat. One of the highest of these is known in the country as Gargantua's seat.

By the time we arrived at St. Georges de Boscherville—called also sometimes St. Martin—we were right glad to house ourselves in the only little auberge which the village affords; and well disposed to be thankful for whatever might be set before us in the shape of dinner.

A Norman village cabaret is the perfection of cleanliness, comfort, and good order, compared with those which are to be found in many other parts of France; though, positively considered, most English travellers would deem it not a little deficient in all these qualities. We placed ourselves at one end of the long massive table, occupying one whole side of the large low room, which constituted the entire ground-floor of the building, and found sufficient amusement, while our hostess was preparing our meal, in observing what was passing around us.

It was Sunday, about four or five o'clock in the afternoon; and consequently the whole

population of the village were abroad, and as busy as bees in making the most of their hours of recreation. Whether or not the system be wrong, which permits and encourages this mode of spending the afternoon of the day of rest, I could not deem that any portion of the fault — if fault there be — lay at the doors of the merry noisy groups around me, who, with light hearts and heels, were enjoying their only respite from life-long toil.

The room we were in was furnished with a variety of small tables besides the large one; and all were as fully occupied as possible with parties — almost all young, many quite boys —drinking cider, smoking, and playing cards. This last amusement, under any circumstances whatever, cannot but be the very worst that could possibly be adopted by the people. The most malignant of its consequences, however, were not here apparent; for, though the players indulged in the most ceaseless and violent vociferation, the gains and losses were computed by liards, and I was unable to detect the smallest evidence of ill-feeling.

A reverent company of the seniors of the village were lounging and chatting in the sun, on and about the steps of the west front of the noble abbey, not fifty yards from the

door of the cabaret. A number of benches, outside the windows of the room we were in, were occupied by a very numerous company of *paysannes* of all ages, every individual of which was, as far as I could judge, striving emulously to utter as many words as possible in a given time. I hold the colloquial scream of one elderly French *paysanne* to be the most dissonant sound in nature; but the effect of the combined efforts of some fifty or sixty is something altogether wonderful.

All this, however, though it prevented us from hearing one another speak, by no means impeded the business of dinner, which now made its appearance. Our hostess placed before us a loaf of very coarse but excellent bread, about the size and appearance of a pitch-kettle, a nice pat of butter, weighing about twelve pounds, a plate of rather anomalous and unintelligible cold meat, a most admirable omelet, filling a brown dish of the size and shape of a milk-pan, and an enormous *caraffe* of cider. Silver forks, clean napkins, and plates, were supplied us; but every man was expected to provide his own knife. My friend had one; but I, most inexcusably for an old traveller, chanced to be unprovided. And I was very much in the predicament of Tantalus, till our hostess, with womanly com-

passion for my helpless condition, fished up from the recesses of an enormous pouch at her side a mighty weapon, with which, after having used the table for a knife-board, I did great execution. A cup of *café noir*, a *petit verre de Cognac* for a *chasse*, and a cigar —not one of Louis Philippe's manufacture— brought our repast to a very satisfactory conclusion; and we then proceeded to visit the celebrated Abbey.

A little boy, who ran to request on our behalf the presence of the sexton and his keys, brought back word from that functionary that he was just in the middle of a "parti;" but that he would come the minute it was finished. It did not take long, and, as the man in office was in high good humour, I suppose he had been victorious.

The church of St. Georges de Boscherville, the only remaining portion of the abbey founded here by Ralph de Tancarville, about 1050, is by far the noblest specimen of Norman architecture I ever saw. I will not attempt any description of it, for it has received, besides the cursory notices of many other travellers, the most perfect illustration both of drawing and description at the hands of Messrs. Turner and Cotman. No less than seven plates are devoted to it in their work—

a decisive proof of its architectural value and importance.

I am an enthusiastic admirer of Gothic architecture; but as I stood at the west end of the nave of Ralph de Tancarville's church, gazing with wonder at the perfection of its proportions, I was almost inclined to think that the severe simplicity and noble though massive forms of these old pillars and arches of eight hundred years ago were more sublime and awe-inspiring than the lighter and more beautiful constructions of later times.

It was a lovely evening when we left St. Georges de Boscherville to walk to Rouen. The sun, though still powerful, had abated much of his noonday splendour, and was setting gloriously behind our backs. His rays, striking the woods obliquely, produced that beautifully chequered and constantly varying light and shade, which most enhances the beauty of sylvan scenery. We strolled on over an undulating and richly wooded country, enjoying much the influences of the hour and the scene, and speculating how far the face of the country was changed since the time when the bargaining quid-pro-quo piety of old Ralph de Tancarville and his peers covered with richly endowed abbeys these banks of Seine. We reached the brow

of the hill, which overlooks Rouen, just in time to see the city lighted up by the last beams of the sun, and there sat ourselves down on the turf by the road-side to feast our eyes at leisure on the splendid scene below us.

I will not describe what has been so often described before, but will merely remark that I think the view of the city from this hill, on the western side, more picturesque than that more vaunted one from St. Catharine's hill on the eastern side of the town. The latter is too close, and shows you Rouen more as a map than as a picture.

We did not leave the seats we had chosen till twilight was well nigh gone; and, as the road makes a very large détour between the hill and the city, we found we had about three times as far to walk as we had supposed, and, consequently, did not get into our inn till bedtime.

CHAPTER IV.

A Night's Rest at Rouen—The Quay—"La Normandie" and her crew—French Emigrants—Quillebœuf—Le Marais Vernier—The Roumois—Its Agriculture—Pont Audemer—The Rille—The Lieuvin—Lisieux—Journey to Falaise.

Quite benighted, and, sooth to say, very nearly tired, we entered somewhat precipitately the first tolerable-looking inn that presented itself to us on our entry into Rouen. The supper, served in a sufficiently neat "salle à manger," was such as to lull us into a fatal security as to the quality of the lodging to which chance had directed us. But oh! the night that awaited us!

I was fast asleep within one minute after turning in to a very clean-*looking* bed; and my fatigue would have securely kept me so against any common cause of disturbance. But in about half an hour, coming slowly and painfully to a state of consciousness, I found myself tossing about at a strange rate, with

a burning heat and irritation all over my body. I thought at first that I was in a high fever; but a little farther examination convinced me that the evil, though quite as disagreeable for the time, was not quite so serious. In short, my bed — that bed, which I had entered with fond anticipations of an unbroken eight hours' snooze—was a nest in which swarmed millions of bugs, even as ants swarm in an ant-hill.

> "The bugs they crept in, and the bugs they crept out,
> And sported my eyes and my temples about,"

and would shortly have eat me up *clean!* But I rushed from the bed, and took up my quarters, for the remainder of the night, in an arm-chair by the open window, where I contrived to effect a very tolerable sleep.

I crave my readers' pardon for thus a second time drawing on his sympathy for misfortunes of this very unheroical description, on the ground that my case may be profitable for example. I learned afterwards that few houses in Rouen are free from this abomination; and it is therefore by no means expedient to enter an inn there at hap-hazard. I passed, on a subsequent occasion, several nights in perfect comfort at the Hotel de Rouen on the quay.

It was at present, however, our intention

to leave that city the morning after we entered it. Not that we were absolutely frightened from the town by our tormentors of last night; but we were anxious to push on to the principal objects of our journey, and intended to look at Rouen at the close of our trip, if we should have any time.

Eight o'clock on that morning found us finishing our *café au lait* and *petits pains* in one of the numerous pretty cafés on the magnificent quay, which runs along the river the whole length of the town. Just before the window at which we were breakfasting, a throng of steamers of all sorts, sizes, and destinations, were taking in and discharging crowds of passengers. Pre-eminent among them was the gallant "Normandie," bound for Havre, by which we intended to descend the river. The bell upon her forecastle now began to summon her passengers together; and we obediently went on board forthwith, not doubting that we should find ample amusement for the quarter of an hour which had yet to elapse before she would leave the quay in observing the gathering of her motley cargo.

The "Normandie" and the "Seine," two steamers recently built to run between Rouen and Havre, are truly most splendid vessels,

and, it must be confessed, surpass in speed and elegance many of the boats on the Thames. They are built of very great length, extremely narrow, and sharp at both ends; and they make six leagues an hour!

An endless stream of men, women, and children, French, English, and Germans, some on business, but more apparently on pleasure bent, were now pouring in over the communication plank, and filling "La Normandie" from stem to stern. The captain ordered "un dernier coup" on the bell, to warn those of his party not yet on board that it behoved them to lose no time in embarking; the communication with the shore was withdrawn almost from under the legs of an old French gentleman, who was pausing, as he passed over it, for a few more last words with some of the crowd on the quay, and we were off.

It required some skill and no little care to extricate the immense length of the Normandie from the crowd of vessels around her; and it was not without an amusing variety of orders in alternate French and English from our captain — the French directions to the sailors on deck being interlarded with such English interpolations as "Stope hair!" — "Bake hair!" addressed to the English engineer below — that we at length found our-

selves clear of all impediments, in the middle of the stream, with " La Normandie's" head towards Havre.

It was a lovely day. The sun was bright; the sky was bright; the river was bright; the burnished brass-covered bulwarks and ornaments of " La Normandie " glanced brightly in the sun, and every body's face looked bright and happy in the expectation of a delightful voyage.

There was one group among us, however, which might have been expected to carry hearts not quite so light, and to wear more sombre looks. They were a party of emigrants, going, with all their household goods, to embark for America at Havre. They were on the point of quitting for ever a city in which they had passed probably all their lives—where they must have left much that was bound to their hearts by time-strengthened bands of affection, and where they must have passed at least some happy days. Yet not one of the merry holiday parties, whose trip down the river had no further object than a day's amusement, or who were on their return to dear and welcoming friends, were chatting more gaily, or laughing more joyously, than this little band of far-bound wanderers. As the group sat

on deck by the side of their own household gear—a description of baggage which speaks but too plainly of deserted homes and broken ties—chatting and laughing over a flagon of Norman cider, they formed an admirable illustration of Horace's "Teucer, Salamina patremque cum fugeret," &c.

But such is a Frenchman—constitutionally gay, and prospective ever, rather than retrospective.

Our numerous company was, I should think, nearly, if not quite, half English. There were English little boys, with telescopes in their hands, rushing aft every minute to report to their respective mammas each new discovery of objects on the shore, which "La Normandie" had, alas! left far behind her, before mamma's more languid interest could be awakened. There were English cockneys astonishing the intellects of the *garçons* with a novel and very extraordinary sample of "Lingua Franca"—an article warranted the production of English industry. There were English "young gentlemen on their travels," in an indescribable state of excitement, arising from the difficulties they experienced in transferring to their sketch-books the lineaments of both banks of the river, as we passed between them at the

speed of six leagues an hour. And, lastly, there was a party of English servants, one of whom, apparently a groom, I overheard, later in the day, when we had reached the broad part of the river, explaining to a too confiding maid-servant that we were now traversing the terrible Bay of Biscay—(O! from the maid) — and that the southern bank was Spain, " where our chaps is gone to purtect the queen of them parts from John Carlos." This discourse, though undoubtedly indicative of an awakened state of intellect, led me to suspect that there must exist some trifling misprint or other in the Knowledge Society's Geography number.

By the time I had completed my short survey of our fellow-passengers, " La Normandie" had reached La Bouille, the prettiest of the pretty villages on the southern bank of the Seine. We paused for about half a minute—for we could hardly be said to stop at all—to admit a passenger, and then once more darted forwards. We just caught a glimpse at the abbey of St. Georges de Boscherville; dashed by Duclair; enjoyed an excellent view of Jumièges, first from one side and then from the other; longed for a stroll under the noble trees in the park at La Mailleraie; took one more flying look at

sweet Caudebec; and found ourselves at Quillebœuf, ere we thought it possible so many miles could have been passed.

Here, descending the side of "La Normandie" with considerable precipitation, we left her to pursue her rapid course to Havre, and were safely landed on the quay of Quillebœuf, before she had proceeded many miles on her way.

It is a remarkable headland on which the little town of Quillebœuf is built. It is in fact the extremity of a long spur of the hill, which rises at some little distance behind the town; and it stands forward, jutting out beyond the line of the rest of the bank, opposing its rocky barrier to the river, which otherwise would probably have overflowed the low ground immediately beyond it. Except its position, Quillebœuf is remarkable for nothing but its shipwrecks, moving sands, and bold pilots. The number of these was for many years fixed at ninety, but has since been increased to a hundred and ten. Even the captain of the Normandie, who passes up or down the river every day of his life, took a pilot to guide his vessel through the changing channels of these redoubtable sands.

The author of a useful but somewhat grandiloquent little volume, intituled "Voyage

historique et pittoresque de Havre à Rouen," begins his chapter on Quillebœuf with the following exquisitely French passage.

" Sortez du sein des flots, qui vous ont submergés, et reparaissez sur l'onde calme et tranquille, navires, à qui cette rade funèbre sert de tombeau! Il me semble voir cette plage homicide couverte encore de vos débris; j'entends les cris des victimes de l'ignorance ou d'une triste fatalité! Mais bannissons ces pensées lugubres; l'aspect de Quillebœuf les a fait naître; que la raison les éloigne."

It was four o'clock and a bright afternoon when we left Quillebœuf, intending to walk to Pont Audemer, and there seek our quarters for the night. Our walk was far too pleasant to allow me to say with any certainty what the distance is, but I should guess it to be about nine or ten miles.

After quitting Quillebœuf, we mounted a long and steep hill; and, on turning round, when we reached the top of it, to take a last look at the Seine, we were struck by the peculiarity of the view which met our eyes. We looked back on the town and the noble estuary of the river, backed by the heights of Tancarville; and all was smiling, bright, warm, and full of life. We turned our heads to the left, and immediately beneath us was stretched,

in all its hideous extent, that remarkable tract of marshy land, called "le Marais Vernier" — an oasis of desolation and pestilence amid the surrounding cheerfulness and beauty. This marsh is so extremely insalubrious, that no human dwelling is to be seen on the face of it. Neither tree nor shrub diversifies its dreary surface; and a more cheerless, miserable, Dismal-Swamp-like sort of spot I never looked on. The inhabitants of the villages even near its borders suffer annually from fevers engendered by its pestilential exhalations. It is bounded on the east by the hill on which we stood, and on the west by the river Rille and the high grounds beyond it.

Leaving without reluctance this blasted spot, we pursued our way to Pont Audemer, through the highly cultivated fields of the Roumois. This appellation is given to all the tract between the Seine and the Rille, which, though not so celebrated for its fertility as the neighbouring "pays d'Auge," presents to agricultural eyes a most cheerful aspect. The farms are small, and almost entirely without inclosures, and exhibit all the signs of a thriving and highly laboured state of cultivation. No space is lost in hedges and ditches; the various crops stand

close together; and whatever is required for pasture is either carried off the land, or, if grazed by the cattle, they are tethered or watched. We met, as we walked onwards, several young peasants, mostly girls, returning home, with their charge obediently following them. In many instances two beasts were led by a cord, either end of which was fastened to one of their horns, while the middle was held by their keeper.

It must be owned that tethered cattle, and a country without hedges, are not such picturesque objects as shady hedgerows and scattered herds; but we must look with utilitarian eyes at the good farming of the Roumois, till we arrive within a mile or two of Pont Audemer. There we are again among steep wood-covered hills, and glistening streams, and green valleys.

This extremely pretty, quiet, and retired little town is built on the Rille, in which there is excellent fishing. A small species of salmon (saumoneau) is caught in its waters, which is said to be found only in this little stream and in the Rhine. Pont Audemer possesses also an exceedingly comfortable, clean, and cheap little inn, with a most obliging and very pretty landlady, who speaks her own English, and who asked me,

with the sweetest smile in the world, on my return from inspecting my room: "Did sir love the chamber he has viewed?"

On the strength of all these various agrémens, I strongly recommend any picturesque-loving disciple of "gentle Izaak," or any party of Oxford men who may wish to fish for a degree with a tutor, during the long vacation, to fix themselves at Pont Audemer. If any such should follow my advice, let him or them not neglect to stroll along the banks of the river as far as Montfort. He will enjoy an extremely pretty walk through a valley offering numerous bits of scenery to the pencil of the sketcher; and at Montfort he may yet see, amid moss and lichens, the remains of gray walls, which were once the castle of Hugh de Montfort, and which, in 1122, withstood for thirty days the attack of our Henry I.

If all this will not tempt any one to visit Pont Audemer, I know not that I can add any thing more to what I have already said in its favour, except that it has the reputation of making the best leather in France.

The next morning we were on foot betimes; though, when I was called at four o'clock, I felt that I very much "loved" the comfortable bed madame had assigned me. But

the fresh morning hours are too precious to a pedestrian to be lost. So, before five o'clock we were *en route* for Lisieux.

Immediately on leaving Pont Audemer we quitted the valley of the Rille, and, ascending a very long hill, found ourselves on a rich-looking and extensive table-land. On leaving the valley, we left also the picturesque scenery which surrounds Pont Audemer. Passing over this high plain, we found a more undulating and more enclosed description of country, and soon entered the district called the Lieuvin — the Lexoviensis ager of the chroniclers. The Lieuvin is generally considered the best cultivated district of Normandy, from which I conceive that we may conclude that it is the best in all France. A considerable quantity of flax and hemp is grown there, and its grain and wool are both celebrated. The apple tree, too, is a prominent feature in the aspect of the country. Every road is lined with them, and many of the fields serve at once as corn-lands and orchards.

Without having any pretensions to romantic scenery, this part of the country has all that sweet and smiling rural beauty, which a surface varied by gentle hills and dales, checquered with rich pastures and

yellow corn-fields, and thickly studded with comfortable-looking cottages, must always produce. It is in truth a species of beauty rarely to be found out of our own merry isle. And, while pausing in our walk to survey the country from the top of some knoll, or lingering at the head of some enticing vale, we were frequently reminded of the warm uplands and watered valleys of sweet Somersetshire.

We breakfasted on bread and milk and eggs at the little village of Cormeilles, situated on the Calone, a rippling stream, which enticed us much to follow its guidance through its own pretty valley, instead of pursuing our course to Lisieux. We resisted the temptation, however, and, journeying onwards, without any farther détour than an expedition to the top of one of the hills overlooking the valley of the Calone, reached Lisieux about two o'clock.

It is a thriving, active, crowded, commercial little town; and, as it happened to be market-day when we arrived there, the busy commotion of the principal street resembled that of an ant-hill disturbed by the plough. Lisieux has a cathedral, and had a bishop till Napoleon's concordat put an end to him. Of his predecessors one at least

deserves to be remembered. Jean Hennuyer was among the courageous and high-principled few who made a stand on behalf of outraged humanity on the fearful day of the St. Bartholomew massacre.

At present Lisieux has not much to attract or delay a traveller. There are some Roman remains for the antiquary, and a tolerably fine west front to the cathedral for the lover of architecture; but I am not aware that it has much else of interest. Before the revolution, indeed, those curious in such matters might have witnessed at Lisieux one of those solemn tom-fooleries which so much delighted the middle ages. Annually, on the eve of St. Ursin, two canons of the chapter dedicated to him were elected counts of the town. Their reverences then proceeded on horseback in their surplices, decorated with garlands, and attended by the municipal authorities and an armed body-guard, to the different gates of the town, of which they received the keys. All administration of civil and criminal justice, during the saint's day and the eve thereof, appertained to them; and any preferment which then chanced to fall was in their gift. And in return for all this, says the historian, no conditions were imposed upon them, except that of being obliged to

give to each of their brethren of the chapter the truly Falstaffian allowance of *one* loaf of bread and *four* bottles of wine.

Lisieux figures in history less conspicuously than most of the other towns of Normandy. Such historical scraps as are to be found concerning it have been gathered by Mr. Turner in his "Tour in Normandy," and need not, therefore, be repeated here. It may be observed, however, for the benefit of any wandering artist of Prout's school, that a variety of subjects for his pencil may be met with there among the numerous carved and quaint old gable-ends with which the principal street still abounds.

A Frenchman would term Pont Audemer "*triste,*" and Lisieux "*gai;*" but I did not feel half the inclination to set up my staff at the latter town, which had tempted me to tarry on the pretty banks of the Rille. So, determining to sleep at Falaise, we clambered to the cabriolet of a diligence, which was very opportunely passing through on its way thither.

Our conveyance on this occasion was no cross-country "convenience," but a thorough-bred Paris diligence, curtailed of none of its fair proportions of "coupé," "interieur," "rotonde," and "cabriolet." This last is

with me a favourite position. It is sufficiently elevated to give the occupant a good view of the country through which he is passing, sufficiently roomy to enable him to stretch his limbs at his ease; and the vast machine moves so leisurely, that he may, if he so please, walk up every hill on the road. Moreover, there is the conductor to talk to.

Mounted then on the cabriolet, and drawn by five heavy and well-conditioned cart-horses, we proceeded at a very staid and dignified pace to Livarot, and thence to St. Pierre, where there is a rather fine old conventual church, and some partially metamorphosed ruins of the abbey to which it belonged.

The general appearance of the country as we proceeded is not so pleasing as it is on the other side of Lisieux; nor has it the same appearance of extreme fertility, though every thing still indicates a comfortable and thriving agricultural population.

The lingering light just served us to reach Falaise, and to see that its situation was remarkable, and, probably, pretty—and then left us entirely. The diligence deposited us at "La Poste," and another hour found us soundly asleep.

CHAPTER V.

Falaise — Its attractions — The Castle — Anecdotes of its siege by Henry IV. — Valdante — Dissertation on Watermills — Norman distances—La Brèche au Diable—Travels in search of a Bed.

In all our proposed excursions there was no place that I had conceived a greater desire to visit than Falaise. But I suspect that, if I had strictly examined the grounds of this preference, they would have been found to consist in the facts, that Falaise was the birthplace of William the Conqueror, that the castle in which he first saw the light is still standing there, and that this castle overlooks a valley rejoicing in the very picturesque-sounding name of "Valdante," and certain rocks bearing the almost equally euphonious appellation of "the rocks of Noron." These are, it is true, not very philosophical grounds of action; but for once I was not deceived by trusting to a name. The castle is worthy of its illustrious lords, and the valley as sweet, and the rocks as romantic, as their

respective appellations; even if these were not grievously spoilt to English ears by being, the one truncated to a dissyllable, and the other pronounced through the nose.

Of course the first object of our reverential attention was the castle; and there "the top of the morning" found us. The situation it occupies is a very fine one, and would be admirably adapted to the purposes of defence, even in these gunpowder days, were it not in a great measure commanded by the heights of Mont Mirat. Indeed, the site of the whole town is fortified by nature in a very remarkable manner, having on three sides almost as perfect a foss and wall as if Vauban, instead of Dame Nature, had been the architect. It is from this rocky barrier that its name is derived—"falesia" in modern latinity, and "falaise" in French signifying, says Mr. Turner, "a rocky shore."

M. Langevin, the historian of Falaise, of whom Dr. Dibdin makes honourable mention, by no means approves a derivation of so modern a date. But William of Britanny, the almoner and poetical chronicler of Philip Augustus, who is a better authority than M. Langevin, assigns the above origin to the name in the eighth book of his Philippis, where he describes the siege of the town by

his patron. I will transcribe the passage, both as containing a good description of the former strength of the place, and as a favourable specimen of the Latin poetry of the period.

> "Vicus erat scabrâ circumdatus undique rupe,
> Ipsius asperitate loci, Falæsa vocatus,
> Normanniæ in medio regionis; cujus in altâ
> Turres rupe sedent et mœnia; sicut ad illam
> Jactus nemo putet aliquos contingere posse.
> Hunc rex innumeris circumdedit undique signis,
> Perque dies septem varia instrumenta parabat,
> Mœnibus ut fractis, villâ potiatur et arce.
> Verum burgenses, et præcipuè Lupicarus,
> Cui patriæ curam dederat rex Anglicus omnem,
> Elegere magis illæsum reddere castrum,
> Omni re salvâ, cum libertatis honore
> Quam belli tentare vices, et denique vinci."

The last adroit little bit of adulation of the court-poet is amusing.

The strong position of Falaise and its important castle have procured for it the honour of having stood no less than nine sieges, which the historians of the town have duly and proudly recorded. The English reader may find them all recapitulated by Mr. Turner.

The inhabitants of Falaise are well aware that their great lion is William the Conqueror; and for a dead lion they certainly make the most of him. All the world knows the story of Arlette, the tanner's pretty

daughter, and the ugly derivative from her pretty name. We were led to the window in the ruins of the keep, from which, as tradition says, Duke Robert saw and became enamoured of the future mother of the Conqueror. And in truth, with the trifling difference in the dramatis personæ, arising from my not being Duke Robert, and the girl who was drawing water below being the daughter of some modern tanner, the whole scene was precisely the same as it must have been when his highness looked out of the window eight hundred years ago. There were the tanyards and the tanners; and there was the same bright fountain sparkling in the sun, from which Arlette was filling her pitcher when Robert saw her, all immediately below the castle walls.

It must, however, be permitted me to observe, with all due reverence for the superior knowledge of the Falaisians on the subject, and the infallibility of their tradition, that Duke Robert must have had a most remarkably sharp eye for a pretty face and form; for the united height of the donjon walls and the rock on which the castle stands is so great, that I could not have distinguished a Medusa from a Venus in the valley beneath.

But perhaps his highness had his opera glass.

A very small vaulted chamber is shewn adjoining that in which the storied window is situated; and this is said to have been Robert's bed-chamber. An arched recess at one end is pointed out as the place for the bed; and on the opposite side is one very small window. The housemaids at Chatsworth would have thought it an exceedingly strange place for a ducal bed-room; but at all events it had all the recommendations which immense strength and security could give it.

When we had sufficiently speculated on these local memorials of the conqueror and his father, our guide directed our attention to Talbot's tower. This was built by that celebrated general, when governor of the castle, about four hundred years after the time of Duke Robert. It is a most magnificent piece of masonry, and is, to all appearance, as firm and compact now as on the day it was built. The only entrance to this tower is a doorway cut in the second story, and approached by a bridge-like communication from the older donjon. One circular recess, hollowed out of the enormous thickness of the walls, forms a staircase; and another similar,

on the opposite side of the tower, is the shaft of a well, with which every story throughout the tower communicates.

With the exception of this tower and the old donjon, very little of the castle remains. A mass of buildings, occupying a portion of the area enclosed by the walls, is exteriorly at least perfectly modern, and is used as a "College"—anglicé grammar-school—for the boys of the town. One of the ramparts, which overlooks the road to the south, has been planted with lime-trees, and forms a very splendid terrace.

At the southern end of this we were shewn the breach in the walls, which "Henri Quatre" made in the last of the nine sieges. The Compte de Brissac, who commanded the garrison, made answer to Henry's summons to surrender, that he had sworn on the holy sacrament to hold the place; and that, if he were obliged to give any further reply, it should be six months hence.

"Ventre St. Gris!" cried Henry, using the exclamation which the Huguenot teachers of his boyish days had invented for him as an innocent substitute for an oath: "I'll change his months into days, and give him absolution from his oath!" And he was very nearly as good as his word; for on the seventh day he

effected the breach which still remains, and took the castle and town. It was only, however, as a French historian most Frenchly declares, "parceque les cœurs français ne pouvaient lui resister."

Several romantic tales are extant of the deeds which were done in this siege, however, which would seem to shew that "les cœurs français" of the Falaisians resisted as long as their bodies would hold out. One is related of a young merchant and his mistress, who fell together in the breach. He had contrived some mode of escaping with her from the town; but to this the lady would by no means consent, protesting that she should hate him for the proposal, were it not that she well knew that his desire to quit the town arose solely from his fear for her safety. So they went back into the thickest of the fray.

The king noticed them in the melée, and commanded that their lives should be spared, if possible. "Mais La Chenaye"—that was the bridegroom's name—"ayant été tué d'un coup de fusil, sa maitresse refusa quartier, et continua de combattre jusqu'à ce que, se sentant blessée à mort, elle s'en retourna expirer auprès du corps de son amant."

Another heroine, by her undaunted bravery, so won the good will of the conqueror, that

she obtained, as a peculiar favour to herself, that the street in which she lived should be exempted from the general pillage.

On our return from the castle to our inn to breakfast, we called on M. Brée, a printer, in the Place Trinité, to inquire for M. Langevin's history of Falaise. Having obtained the volume, we were most courteously intreated by M. Brée, on his finding that we were strangers, whose business at Falaise was to see the town, to walk into his garden at the back of the house, from whence there is the best near view of the castle and most picturesque part of the town that can be found. I think that a more effective sketch might be taken from this point than any of those I have seen.

After breakfast we again set out for a walk in the Valdante. Passing through the Porte d'Enfer, we descended into the valley by a steep road winding round the base of the rock on which the castle stands. This brought us into a narrow gorge, formed by the castle rock on one side, and the bare crags of Mont Mirat on the other. At our feet rippled the Ante, which, on its way through the glen, first supplies the little fountain still known as Arlette's well, then forms a basin for the use of the washer-

women of the town, and, lastly, performs the more arduous task of turning sundry mills.

A large bevy of "blanchisseuses" were, when we passed, labouring at their vocation, banging the linen with their little wooden trowels as if they were going to make paper of it, and chattering away like the inhabitants of a rookery when disturbed by a shot. When they saw us pause at Arlette's well, a couple of them jumped up, and raced towards us, with cups for us to drink from the storied fount; and most excellent water we found it.

We then proceeded to mount the rocks of Mont Mirat, a pile of bare gray crags, rising to a greater height than the opposite eminence occupied by the castle. A well beaten path wound among the disjointed masses, and brought us to the summit, from which there is a very perfect, but scarcely sketchable, view of the castle, town, and valley.

The rocky ridge, of which Mont Mirat forms the extremity, continues for a mile or two to overlook a most deliciously secluded little valley; in some spots hardly more than wide enough to allow a passage to the stream; in others swelling sufficiently to form the most verdant and cool-looking little nooks conceivable. In one of these the stream turns a mill, which, with its mill-dam, its owner's

cottage, with the good-wife spinning at the door, the two or three cows grazing in an adjoining paddock, and a bare-legged little girl filling her pitcher at the stream, formed as perfect a little domestic landscape as a sketcher could desire.

Why is it that a water-mill is almost always an extremely picturesque object? It may be answered that it implies the presence of one important element of the picturesque —water. But, then, so also does a canal wharf! So that cannot be the only cause. Is it because the building is almost always more or less weather-beaten and out of repair; because its moss-grown planks generally present so motley, yet so mellow, a variety of tints: or is it because mills, having, in very many instances, been originally appendages of some convent or castle, they were hence likely to be placed in some pleasing and desirable spot.

However this may be, the water-mill in the Valdante, near Falaise, is one of the prettiest of water-mills; and we admired the secluded little nook, in which it stands, so much, that we sat down on the rock that overlooks it, and, giving Fancy carte blanche, forthwith began to appropriate the little valley, and make it the scene of as enchant-

ing a cottage and gardens as town-sick mortal ever dreamed of. The exact spot was chosen on which the cottage was to be placed, with its back to the opposite hill, so as to face the south, and to have the streamlet in front. Thus much of the outline of the picture was distinctly traced. As for the details of this part of it, Fancy just delicately sketched in upon her canvas visions of oriel-windowed breakfast-parlours, with sunbeams glancing on snowy table-cloths, garnished with Sévres breakfast-cups and brown loaves. The rugged sides of the valley were to be clothed with trees—Scotch fir and mountain ash we felt sure would grow there. The miller's paddock, sloping to the stream, would make a lovely lawn. The happy owner would be "monarch of all he surveyed;" morning calls would be unknown to him; dull dinner-parties unheard of; and "rumour of oppression and deceit would never reach him more." The picture was completed by mingling visions of an Adam and Eve, suitable to Fancy's Paradise, strolling on warm terraces lined with rows of myrtle, and tranquil afternoons spent "nunc veterum libris, nunc somno, et inertibus horis."

But, while we were thus building our castle of indolence, the present hours were flying.

So we descended from our perch upon the rock, and, leaving the envied mill in peaceable possession of its sequestered valley, began our walk back to Falaise, along the margin of the stream.

Our next object was to visit some remarkable rocks, situated a few miles to the north of Falaise, called the "Brèche au Diable." So, when we found ourselves again at Mont Mirat, we once more mounted the crags, and, thinking that we might save a mile or two by not returning to Falaise, struck across the country towards the Caen road. We soon reached the excellent, broad, white, macadamized "grande route," which leads from Falaise to Caen, and followed it for some distance over a plain, which apparently consists wholly of the beautiful Caen stone. and which is pierced by numberless pits, sunk for the purpose of working it.

The day was exceedingly hot, and, when we had walked two or three miles, it struck us that a march along a shadeless chalk road, however excellent, was not the most agreeable thing in the world. We began, therefore, to inquire of the various persons we met how far it might be to the Brèche au Diable; intending to give it up, and return to Falaise, if any considerable portion of the very excel-

lent, but very disagreeable, chalk road still remained to be traversed. But the information obtained was of much the same quality as that afforded to Guy Mannering, on his never to be forgotten journey to Kippletringan. Our first application was to a farmer, who came trotting along on a stalwart cart-horse. His reply encouraged us.

" Messieurs, ce n' est qu' un petit quart de lieue, ou comme-ça."

We had walked as we thought about the distance named, when an old woman checked our impatience with—

" La Brèche au Diable ! Mon dieu ! vous avez encore un bon grand lieue ;" adding, however, for our consolation, " vous n'avez que suivre la route toujours, toujours tout droit."

Our previous experience of Norman measures had taught us never to estimate a " bon grand lieue" under five or six miles, or thereabouts. This was bad. But, as the authorities disagreed so materially, and, hoping that the old lady's standard of measure might be her own powers of locomotion, we did not yet give it up.

The result, however, was that, after having been tantalized with " une demi-lieue de poste à-peu-prés "—" trois quarts de lieue"—" cinq

quarts de lieue," &c., we at last turned back to Falaise, on receiving from a postilion, who must have traversed the distance a thousand times, what was probably the only true answer in the collection—"Ma foi! je n'en sçais rien!"

In the evening, however, we again set forth in a char-à-banc, whose proprietor engaged to take us to the Brèche au Diable and bring us back to Falaise for the sum of five francs. We found that the old lady's estimate of the distance had been the nearest approximation to the truth, and we rejoiced accordingly that we had not persevered in our broiling walk.

The rocks in which the devil, indulging his well known taste for romantic scenery, has executed the brèche or cleft in question, lie a little to the right of the road from Falaise to Caen. Their more correct name is the rocks of St. Quentin, and they traverse, in a direction from east to west, a pretty valley, which must, ere the disruption took place, have been divided by the chain into two portions. M. Lange, in a "Notice sur la Roche St. Quentin," published in the Memoirs of the Society of Antiquaries of Normandy, conjectures that the southern part of this valley must have been once a lake of considerable extent. At present the chasm affords a pas-

sage to a little stream, called the Poussendre, which, on issuing from the gorge, takes the name of Laizon, and afterwards falls into the Dive.

It is a wild and romantic spot enough, exhibiting all the characteristics which usually mark its reputed author's attempts at landscape gardening, as exemplified in the different bridges, walls, dykes, and passages, known in different parts of the world as his handiwork.

Another specimen of a similar disruption of a mountain, but on a larger and grander scale, may be seen at Cheddar in Somersetshire, and is well known to lovers of romantic scenery as Cheddar cliffs.

The rocks of St. Quentin have yet a third name, "Le Mont Joly," by which they are as often described as by any other. Perched on the very dizziest edge of the precipice, on a huge mass of rock, is seen a sufficiently ugly little square lump of masonry, which is pointed out to the traveller as the great lion of the place. A variety of inscriptions, in verse and prose, in French and in Latin, inform him that this is the tomb of Marie Elisabeth Joly, who was, once upon a time, an actress at the "Théâtre Français," and who died in 1798. Her husband buried her here, and then wrote a little book to tell the world all about it.

I suppose that I very much expose my own ignorance by confessing, that, notwithstanding the precaution taken by her spouse, I had never, before visiting her tomb, heard of Marie Elisabeth Joly. For, judging by the quantity of pencil-scribbled rhymes about "cœurs," "pleurs," "fleurs," and the like, recording the emotions of pilgrims to her tomb, she must have been a personage of some celebrity.

Possibly her fame may have been altogether posthumous. A young wife buried on the top of a lonely rock, instead of in a Christian burial-ground, and a book published by the agonized husband to tell them the how, and the why, and the when, would appeal irresistibly to French sympathies, and fail not to render a tomb so advertized a very favourite resort of romantic pilgrims.

The "guardian of the tomb" complained, with great indignation, that certain "mauvais sujets" had so far suffered their enthusiasm to outrun their honesty and discretion, as to visit the sacred spot surreptitiously by climbing up the face of the cliff, and so indulge their feelings without paying for it, thereby defrauding him of his perquisites as cicerone.

By the time we had paid due attention to

Madame Joly and the poetry of her admirers, and had scrambled down the cliffs, and strolled through the gorge, by the side of the little stream, which finds a tortuous passage amid the fallen masses of rock, the light was fast failing us, and we bethought ourselves of returning to Falaise. As we entered it, the moon was rising over Talbot's tower, silvering its white freestone, and showing its tall figure above the darker outline of the remainder of the ruin, like the pale ghost of a tower haunting the scene of its former existence.

We had a narrow escape from being left to admire moonlight effects more at our leisure than we should have thought desirable. For our perfidious landlord first undertook to secure us places in the mail, to proceed that night to Caen, which he had no power to do, and then, on the arrival of the vehicle quite full, told us that the chambers we had occupied were now let to others.

It was past eleven o'clock, and we had nothing for it but to sally forth on the almost hopeless errand of knocking up somebody, and persuading them to admit us. For all the world of Falaise, with the exception of those waiting the arrival of the mail, were long since in the land of dreams We at

last succeeded in finding another tolerable inn, but to effect an entrance was the difficulty. We did however succeed in this also by dint of perseveringly banging, kicking, and bawling at the porte cochère for about an hour.

A girl, half awake and a quarter dressed, then made her appearance, and we were at length admitted to the kitchen, after passing a very creditable examination as to whence we came, what we wanted, and who we were. Our case was then reported to the landlady, who held a "bed of justice" for the consideration of it, the result of which was, that we were, after some delay, promoted to comfortable quarters.

CHAPTER VI.

Journey to Caen—Death of William the Conqueror—Drawing for the Conscription—The Bessin—Prospect of Caen—The Church of St. Etienne—The College—French and English Boys—M. Mancel—Olivier Basselin—The Hospital.

Our night's rest was a short one, for it was nearer one than twelve when we reached our beds last night; and at half past five this morning we were on the diligence on our road to Caen.

We soon lost sight of Falaise "tower and town," and a short twenty miles brought us from the cradle of its most illustrious native to his grave. The circumstances of the Conqueror's death and of his burial beneath the pile he had himself raised at Caen are well known. But the following version of the tale, in the quaint and nervous language of old Thomas Fuller, is worth extracting. It is in his Church History, and runs as follows:

• "Now was the time come of king William's death, ending his days in Normandy. But,

see the unhappiness of all human felicity! For his breath and his servants forsook him both together; the latter leaving him, as if his body should bury itself. How many hundreds held land of him in knight's service! Whereas now neither knight nor esquire to attend him! At last, with much ado his corpse are brought in mean manner to be interred at Caen. As they were prepared for the earth, a private person forbids the burial, till satisfaction were made unto him, because the king had violently taken from him that ground, on which that church was erected.

"Doth not Solomon say true· A living dog is better than a dead lion, when such a little cur durst snarl at the corpse of a king and a conqueror?

"At last the monks of Caen made a composition, and the body was buried. And, as it was long before this king's corpse could get peaceable possession of a grave; so since, by a firm ejection, he hath been ousted of the same; when French soldiers, A. D., 1562, (amongst whom some English were mingled) under Chatilion, conducting the remnant of those which escaped in the battle of Dreux, took the city of Caen in his way, and, out of pretence forsooth to seek for some treasure

supposed to be hid in his tomb, most barbarously and cowardly brake up his coffin, and cast his bones out of the same."

As we proceeded on our journey, we observed that all the villages and hamlets we passed through were in a state of more than ordinary bustle and activity. There were groups of men conversing eagerly in front of the village cabarets, and knots of anxious-looking women gathered here and there about the doors, whose tongues seemed to labour in their vocation less blithely than they are wont, and whose demeanour seemed to denote that the subject of their causerie was of a graver interest than usual. The labours of the forge were discontinued, and scarcely a spinning-wheel was to be seen in motion through the whole of the village street. Every thing betokened an unwonted degree of excitement and interest.

It was not long before the mystery was explained. We were stopping to change horses in a poor and scanty road-side hamlet, about half-way between Falaise and Caen, when two cabriolets — handsome and well appointed for a French province — together with three or four persons on horseback, entered the village-street at a brisk trot, and, dashing up to the door of a cottage a

little superior in appearance to its neighbours, which called itself "La Mairie," pulled up short, with an air of business-like importance and hurry. Two officers in uniform, and sundry personages, who looked like clerks, stepped from the carriages and from their saddles, and, after a variety of bowings, each pertinaciously refusing to enter first, like sheep at the door of a slaughter-house, the elder officer at last bolted in foremost, and all the rest followed him into the little mairie. The movement among the inhabitants increased; and it was clear that all the symptoms of excitement were connected with the business, whatever it might be, which was now being transacted there.

An application to one of our fellow-passengers explained the matter at once.

"C'est le tirage pour la conscription. Ces messieurs là sont les officiers, qui doivent parcourir l'arrondissement, pour le faire dans chaque commune."

The interest the poor villagers took in what was going on was intelligible enough. For though the conscription is no longer the fearful engine, which, wielded by the ruthless hands of that second "scourge of God," Napoleon Bonaparte, made half the mothers in France childless, depopulated her fields,

and demoralized her population; yet it is a heavy burthen upon the lower classes, and in particular bears distressingly upon the rural population. It must, too, I should conceive, have a deeply evil influence on the morals and habits of the youth of France. The forcible, though but temporary, disruption of family ties, and the removal of the young conscript beyond the sphere of the little world where his character is known, and where the opinion of his elders and equals exercises a salutary influence on his conduct, cannot but be extremely injurious.

We had seen on the walls, wherever we had passed, placards headed, "Aux pères des familles," with the word "Remplaçant" in large letters farther down the paper; but we had not been before aware of their purpose. They were advertisements from people, whose trade it is to furnish substitutes to serve as conscripts. They generally offer either to supply at a given price a substitute for a conscript, who has been drawn, or, for a much smaller sum, paid previously to the "tirage," to insure those liable to it against having to serve.

I should much have liked to remain in the village where we had witnessed the arrival of the ministers of fate, and to see the result of

the "tirage," and the reception of its award by the parties concerned. But the conductor's "En route, messieurs!" recalled us to our places "en haut;" and, leaving many a beating heart behind us—mothers, and fathers, and sons, all equally anxious, anxious perhaps in some instances for opposite events —we jogged forward on our road toward Caen.

The country between that city and Falaise is of a very different character from that of any part of Normandy we had before passed through. It is open, bleak, poor-looking, and thinly populated, and resembles parts of Picardy much more than it does the fertile fields of most of the districts of Normandy. We passed several village churches, whose simple little square towers, with their round arches and slanting roofs, marked them as specimens of early Norman architecture. Some of their towers were pierced through with arches in both directions; and some, instead of terminating in the ungraceful slanting roof, were surmounted by picturesque stone-covered spires. This part of Normandy is called the "Bessin," and is, I believe, of all its districts the richest in these specimens of village churches in the early Norman style.

About nine o'clock we came in sight of

the spires of Caen, rising, it might almost be said in clusters, into the air, and marking in every direction the extent of the town.

With the single exception of matchless Oxford, I certainly know no city of similar size and importance, which presents so striking and imposing an appearance to the traveller approaching it as Caen. The noble trees, too, which line its public walks and gardens, unite with its handsome buildings to produce a coup-d'œil, the more striking from its contrast to the bleak tracts of country which surround it. When at length we had rumbled through the fauxbourg St. Vaucelles, crossed the river, and entered the "grande rue St. Jean," we acknowledged that the appearance of Caen from without was not so deceitful as that of many towns. Few so handsome streets as the "grande rue St. Jean" are to be found in any of the provincial cities of France. The beautiful stone, of which the town is built, has been judiciously turned to the best effect; and the noble rows of lofty houses, handsome shops, and fine façades, present an appearance in the highest degree indicative of comfort and prosperity.

Caen has been compared to Oxford, to Bath, to Edinburgh. The prospect of the city from a distance certainly may recall that

of the towers and trees of Oxford. But Caen, beautiful as it is, must not push its emulation of our Athens beyond this. It is, of course, the similarity of the beautiful stone that has suggested its comparison to Bath. There are, however, essential differences in the qualities of the Norman and Somersetshire material. The Bath stone, when fresh, is not of so dazzling a white as that of Caen; and time does not impart to the latter that fine grey tint which it does to the former. Still it is true that the similarity of the material imparts to these freestone cities such a general air of resemblance as can be supposed to exist between the two, the site of one of which is flat, while that of the other is remarkably the reverse.

Those who have found any likeness between the capital of Lower Normandy and that of Scotland have regarded, I conceive, the moral rather than the physical aspect of either city. They have been struck, probably, by the similarity of the contrast between Caen and Rouen to that between Edinburgh and Glasgow. As Edinburgh has been termed the Athens of Scotland, so may Caen be called that of Normandy. It is as essentially learned and literary as Rouen is industrious and commercial. Perhaps, with

the exception of the capital, no town in France can exhibit so long and imposing a list of "worthies" as Caen. Its learned historian, Bishop Huet, in his "Origines de la Ville," enumerates no less than a hundred and thirty-seven "Hommes de Caen illustres dans l'Eglise et dans les lettres." And very many of these are names of a lasting and European reputation.

Caen is a perfect museum of architectural antiquities. There are specimens of churches of almost all dates, and in every possible stage of decomposition, if I may be allowed to use such an expression. There are beautiful structures to delight the eye of the architectural tiro; and there are shapeless masses, headless statues, and unintelligible inscriptions, to glad the heart, whet the ingenuity, and exercise the pen, of the practised antiquary.

Of course the principal object of attraction is the far-famed "Abbaye aux Hommes," whose church is dedicated to St. Stephen. The sight of this building would alone well repay the trouble of a journey to Caen. It is, I believe, considered by antiquaries and architects a very important illustration of the history of the art. But, putting aside all the interest it may derive from this source, and

looking on its forms and proportions merely with the eye of an ignoramus, I could not but be conscious that I was gazing on the creation of a master mind. Severely simple, yet elegantly light; graceful in outline, yet of a solidity, which seems to promise a prospective existence equal in duration to its past, it possesses in an eminent degree all that the imagination requires in an edifice consecrated to the worship of the Deity.

The adjacent buildings of the ci-devant abbey are now used for a public school—one of the largest and most celebrated of France. There are many English lads educated there; and, as it happened that I had some acquaintance with one of them, I presented myself at the gate, and desired to see him. I was referred to a priest holding some office in the college, with a very middle-age-Latin sounding title, which I forget; and, on repeating my request, received from him a printed billet, in which he inserted the name of my young friend. I was then shown into a large and handsome "parloir," where he soon made his appearance.

I gathered from my conversation with him that their discipline was sufficiently rigorous, and their general mode of life particularly free from any thing like luxury. The good

fathers, who conduct the establishment, seem to be strongly of the opinion that "a lean diet maketh a sharp wit." If, however, the burly gentleman whom I saw was dieted on cabbage soup, it certainly "had prospered marvellously with him."

I had promised myself the pleasure of liberating my young acquaintance for one day from college discipline and maigre diet; but, when I proposed to him to come and dine with us, he said it was impossible. He added that they were permitted to visit their friends on one day in the week, and that that was the day; but, unfortunately, it was about half an hour past the time for asking permission. I suggested that it surely could not be deemed a sufficient reason for refusing to permit a boy to visit a friend casually passing through the town, that the permission was unavoidably applied for half an hour after the fixed time. But the poor prisoner assured me that it was perfectly useless to make any application, as it would infallibly be met by a refusal.

I was much amused by one bit of English spirit of the good old school, which my conversation with the young Englishman elicited. I inquired of him if there existed much national jealousy among the English and the

French boys in the school. He replied that there certainly was a good deal. But, on my asking next whether this was a source of much annoyance to the English boys, he confessed that in some of the wards it was; but that, in his ward, (speaking in the most quiet matter-of-fact way imaginable), they mustered nearly twenty out of fifty, and were, therefore, well able to take care of themselves.

On leaving the "Abbaye aux Hommes," we proceeded to make a regular tour of the city, and visited all the handsome churches, noble quays, and beautiful promenades it contains. But it is not my intention to make my reader my companion in this perambulation; since, though it is not quite such beaten ground as Rouen, the antiquarian and architectural honours of Caen have been done by abler hands than mine. I will only observe, for the benefit of the tiro, that Huet's "Origines de la Ville de Caen" is a model of antiquarian topographical research, and a highly interesting volume.

We paid a long and interesting visit to M. Mancel, in the rue St. Jean, a bookseller and publisher of numerous works on the history and antiquities of Normandy. And truly his list of publications shows that the antiquaries,

historians, topographers, and artists of this interesting province, have not been wanting in labours of love towards their native soil. I believe that all the departments which compose it, and many of the arrondissements, have been described in separate and elaborate histories. Among this phalanx of antiquarian learning, the names of Guizot, Delarue, Liguet, Caumont, Depping, &c. are prominent.

M. Mancel has also an extensive collection of old books on Norman history; but the rarest and most curious articles are congregated into a most bibliomaniacal looking little cabinet, and are *not* for sale.

Among these he shewed us a copy of the original edition of the Vaudevires of Olivier Basselin. I remembered the delight Dr. Dibdin expresses, in his bibliographical tour, on acquiring a copy of a privately printed modern edition; and judging thence that "à fortiori" the veritable "editio princeps" must be a most notable rarity, I examined it with some curiosity. The perusal, however, of a very few lines, here and there, sufficed to convince me that Olivier Basselin well deserves that his effusions should be as scarce as the most exclusive bibliomaniac in possession of a copy could desire; and that

the reprint of them could not be too "private."

There is one circumstance, however, connected with these songs, which is worth preserving. They were composed in the neighbourhood of the beautiful little town of Vire, at a spot called the "Vaux de Vire;" from which name arises, by an easy transition, the familiar modern term "Vaudeville."

Another curiosity, which M. Mancel shewed us, was the original charter of the famous Abbey of Bec, with the original seals, ten in number, still appended to it, and in very perfect preservation.

Leaving M. Mancel, with many thanks for his obliging kindness, and carrying off with us a tolerably complete selection of books on Norman history, we found that we had just time, before leaving Caen, to pay a second visit to the "Abbaye aux Dames," Matilda's royal foundation. We had before visited the church; and our present object was to see the interior of the convent, now a community of sisters of charity, and a hospital. Our petition to the superior having been graciously heard, we were conducted through the whole establishment.

The good sisters seemed to be very proud of it, and not unreasonably; for it is cer-

tainly the most perfect model for a hospital that can be conceived. The wards, the bath-rooms, the kitchens, the laboratories, the operation-room, the store-rooms, all of them exhibited the perfection of cleanliness, order, and admirable adaptation to their respective purposes. We thought the kitchens especially well worth seeing. A fat good-humoured sister, who was presiding in this department, answered our commendations with—"Eh bien! la cuisinière peut souvent faire autant pour les malades que le medecin; n'est ce pas?"

Most deliciously-smelling "potage" was being served out from an enormous cauldron, while we were looking on; and I am sure, if eyes and nose are at all to be trusted in such matters, that no wealthy invalid could have his broth more delicately and carefully prepared than the paupers in the hospital at Caen.

The whole of the establishment, indeed, was so well worth examining, and there were so many more objects to be looked at than we had anticipated, that we began to fear the diligence, in which we had taken places, would leave Caen without us. But it was impossible to get away till every ward, and almost every separate bed, had been visited. "Mais il ne faut pas oublier ceci"—"il faut absolu-

ment voir cela," urged the sister, who did the honours, till at last we ran off almost in the middle of her eulogy of a new vapour-bath upon an improved principle; and, making the best of our way to the "bureau de diligence," arrived there just in time to leave Caen for Bayeux at four o'clock in the afternoon.

CHAPTER VII.

Bayeux — The Tapestry — The Cathedral — The Canon of Cambremer's Ride — Danish Language at Bayeux — Specimen of the Patois of the Bessin — Norman Love of Litigation — Journey to St. Lo.

A TEDIOUS and uninteresting drive of three hours and a half brought us to Bayeux. The country through which we passed is of the same description with that on the other side of Caen — open for the most part, level, and poor-looking. Nor, at first sight, does the town appear to offer much, besides its curious cathedral, to compensate the traveller for the dull monotony of its environs.

A more mature investigation, however, will discover that Bayeux, though it cannot boast the middle-age splendour of Rouen, or the architectural riches and beauty of Caen, has yet claims to attention and interest. Before La Jeune France was born or thought of, old France recognized Bayeux as the capital of the Bessin; and the metropolitan of Rouen

long regarded her bishop as his most august and most important suffragan. The Norman dukes deemed her second to none of their cities but princely Rouen; and, at a still more distant period, the mysterious priests of an earlier race had here established one of their most celebrated temples.

But times are sadly changed with Bayeux. Her wealth, her feudal castle, her commerce, and her importance, have disappeared. Her extent even is much diminished; and her venerable cathedral stands amid the impoverished city, the sole memorial of her former grandeur.

There are two objects which attract travellers to Bayeux — the far-famed tapestry and the cathedral; and we accordingly paid our respects to both.

We greatly admired the tall, rigid, cylindrical gentlemen in chain-armour and conical helmets, and were enchanted with the horses, and their alternate green and yellow legs, in Matilda's royal sampler. I would not for the world be deemed insensible to their merits. Yet is it my intention, nevertheless, to indulge in the eccentricity of not publishing a dissertation thereon. I have no objection, however, to admit candidly that I do not know, with any degree of certainty, whether Matilda or

the Empress Maud were the real author of the work in question.

But, to induce the antiquaries to pardon so singular and gross a piece of ignorance, I will, for their sakes, echo the warning Mr. Turner gives in his notice of the tapestry. It is in its present keeping rapidly hastening to destruction. An old woman takes the precious roll out of a cupboard, in an apartment of the Hotel de Ville, and, placing it on one side of a large round table, flings it out by long arm-lengths for the inspection of visiters, as a draper would measure broad-cloth. The worsted is already frayed in many places; and, unless it be speedily committed to the keeping of some more careful and responsible guardian, this most interesting relic, which has survived the ignorant neglect of eight hundred years, will perish by the learned curiosity of this most superlatively enlightened nineteenth century.

The cathedral, though large and lofty, is remarkable rather for curious details, than as a grand or striking whole; and is, therefore, dearer to the architectural connoisseur than to the mere unscientific admirer of elegant forms and noble proportions. It is an edifice interesting to the antiquary by the numerous odds and ends of ancient art, which it con-

tains; but, as these have been well and amply described by others, especially by Mr. Turner, I will, instead of saying any thing more about the building, give the reader a chapter of its history.

It was Chistmas eve, in the year of grace, 1537; and the bells of Bayeux cathedral were calling the canons to vespers. One after another, clad in short lace-trimmed surplices and large warm fur caps, the good fathers paced up the church and took their places in the choir, till all save one were assembled.

The vacant stall was that of the canon of Cambremer. Now it must be confessed that Master Jean Patye, the canon of Cambremer, was so often elsewhere, and differently engaged, when he ought to have been sustaining his share of the sacred chant in his place in the choir, that his absence on the present occasion would have caused no great surprise among his brethren, even if there had been no especial reason to account for it.

On the eve of Christmas, 1537, however, this was not the case.

Every body knows that the wealthy chapter of Bayeux was from time immemorial bound to send one of their number every year to Rome at Christmastide, then and there to chant the epistle at the midnight mass, which,

in all Roman Catholic churches, ushers in Christmas morning. The misdeed on the part of the chapter, which had originally caused the infliction of this penance, is not a matter of so much notoriety; but it is certain that a very heavy mulct was assigned as the penalty for failing to perform it.

Now in the year before mentioned it fell to the turn of the canon of Cambremer to discharge this duty. And the chapter supposed him to be at that moment in Rome, preparing himself in all probability for his midnight office, with a comfortable flask from some of the rich vintages of the Apennine.

The last bell had ceased; and the first swell of the organ, accompanied by the voices of the chapter raising in well taught unison their evening service, was resounding through the aisles, when, with slow and tranquil steps, and an unconcerned abstracted air—in walked the canon of Cambremer, and calmly proceeded to the vacant stall!

Never did gorgon's head or basilisk's eye produce a more instantaneous or more petrifying effect on their victims, than did the appearance of the unconscious Master Jean Patye on his amazed brethren. Arrested suddenly in the full tide of the Gregorian chant, the words died on their lips; and

the whole choir gazed in open-mouthed and speechless dismay at what most of them deemed a visitant from the world of spirits.

Jean Patye, however, soon succeeded in convincing them of his terrestrial identity; but the good fathers were no sooner assured of the bodily presence of their brother, than their alarm took a new and more substantial direction. It was Christmas eve; and in a few hour's time there would be midnight mass in the holy chapel at Rome, and no canon of Bayeux to chant the epistle!

The chapter began to calculate the amount of the fine, and to tremble for their next year's incomes.

The matter was soon explained. Master Jean Patye had forgotten all about the midnight mass and his journey to Rome; and, while the chapter had long since supposed him on his way thither, he had all the time been closely confining himself to his study, where his days, and most of his nights, as is said, were spent in the pursuit of certain favourite sciences, very little connected with holy thoughts or things.

Undisturbed by the torrent of reproaches poured on him thick and fast by his indignant brethren of the chapter, the canon of Cambremer, as soon as he could get an op-

portunity to edge in a word, assured them that a journey to Rome was no such mighty matter as they might imagine; that there was plenty of time, and to spare; and that, with their good leave, he would first assist at vespers, and then set out on his journey. And he begged of them in the mean time in no wise to disquiet themselves about the matter.

All this sounded mighty strange; but, as Master Patye had always been reckoned a wonderfully learned man, the fathers concluded that he knew what he was talking about, shrugged their shoulders, and trusted it might all turn out well.

When the vespers were finished the canon of Cambremer returned to his cell, and, carefully bolting the door, forthwith applied himself to his "grimoire." A little turning of the leaves, and a few words of power, were soon followed by their desired effect. The devil, who, as we all know, is at any time ready to stoop to conquer, presented himself in person, and very submissively inquired the churchman's will.

Instead of making any direct reply, the canon demanded what speed the devil could make on a journey when time pressed, and important matter was on hand.

The devil, determined, I suppose, to cut out the imp, who promised Faust to fly with him like the thought of man, answered that upon occasion he could traverse kingdoms and intervening oceans with the speed of *woman's* thought.

"That's just the thing," quoth Jean Patye; "for, the fact is, I must be in Rome to-night by twelve o'clock; and I shall consider myself under a personal obligation to you, if you will have the kindness to let me ride there on your back."

"As for kindness," said the devil, "why, that is neither here nor there, you know. But, since you say that you shall consider yourself bound to me for ever, and make a point of it, why I don't care if I consent to do you a good turn."

"Get ready, then," said the canon, "and be under the organ of the cathedral at nine o'clock, without fail. I will mount there."

The devil promised to be punctual, bowed respectfully, and turned to leave the room, but looked round as he was going out, and said with a nod to the canon :—

"We understand one another about my little perquisite in this matter?"

"It's all right," said Jean Patye, adding in Latin as soon as the devil had shut the

door, "do n't you wish you may get it, old fellow! You shall take me up in a church, and put me down in a church; and then you may go whistle for your bargain."

Exactly at nine o'clock the priest was seen to enter the cathedral. Underneath the organ, punctual to his promise, though very much annoyed and disgusted by the fumes of the incense, which yet floated in the air, he found the devil waiting for him. So he jumped upon his back, and in the winking of an eye was dashing away through mid-air in gallant style.

In the course of the journey the devil tried to persuade him to make the sign of the cross; addressing to him the following infernal, and not very perspicuous distich; which, like most other of the devil's sayings, will read equally well, beginning at either end:—

> "Signa te, signa; temere me tangis, et angis,
> Roma tibi subito motibus ibit amor."

Jean Patye, however, was too old a bird to be caught with any such chaff as that. He was up to the devil's tricks, as a priest should be. So he gave him no other answer than "Allez toujours, mon ami," and a punch on the infernal ribs with his heel.

He arrived in Rome just as they were singing the commencement of the midnight mass. The devil shied uncommonly, plunged and kicked, and became quite restive at the sound of the organ; so that the good canon had much ado to get him up to the church-door. He stuck to him, however, and at last succeeded in forcing him into the porch. He there dismounted, and, leaving the devil with strict orders not to stir till he came back, he went into the choir, and duly chanted the epistle according to custom.

But Jean Patye thought that, though a midnight ride such as that he had just accomplished was all very well for once and away, it would be on the whole just as well not to be under the necessity of repeating it. So, on entering the sacristy, when his duty was concluded, he begged to see the document by virtue of which this service was demanded of the chapter of Bayeux. The paper was put into his hands, and was found to be in all respects authentic, clear, and explicit.

"I'll be shot, though," thought the canon of Cambremer to himself, "if I ride the devil to Rome again to read an epistle, for all that!" So he suddenly flung the scroll into the fire, and, dashing through the thunder-

struck Roman priests, regained his position on the devil's back, who was waiting very impatiently at the door of the church till the service should be concluded, and was off and away on his way back to Bayeux, before they could recover from their amazement.

He arrived safely in Bayeux cathedral exactly as the clocks of the town were striking three, having been absent just six hours. So that it should seem, that the devil made greater speed in returning from Rome than in going thither; which, doubtless, arose from the savour of the holy city being disagreeable to him.

These are the simple facts, as they are recorded for our instruction by the veracious chronicler of Bayeux. Like his brethren of those days, he tells us his tale without gloss or comment, and leaves posterity to make the most of it. It is for us, like enlightened historians of the present day, to extract the moral lesson, which no doubt the facts were intended to convey. In many cases there may be some little difficulty in finding this; but the history of the canon of Cambremer's ride was evidently designed to teach that, if we do not remember our duties in proper season, there will be the devil to pay.

* * * * *

With the exception of the cathedral and the famous tapestry, the antiquities of Bayeux must be sought in the language, manners, and customs of the people, rather than in visible and tangible relics. And, perhaps, in no district of Normandy have the gallant race, who came as barbarians and remained soon as teachers and civilizers, left more distinct and marked traces of their own origin.

It should seem, from the following curious and interesting passage in a Norman trouvère of the twelfth century, that it was at Bayeux that the conquerors longest preserved their original language. It is from Benoit de Saint-More's rhyming history of the dukes of Normandy. William Longa-Spatha is addressing Boton, count of the Bessin, concerning the education of his son Richard, and speaks as follows:

> " Se à Roem le faz garder
> E norir gaires lungement,
> I ne sara parler neient
> Daneis; kar nul nel i parole.
> Si voil kil seit à tele escole,
> Ke as Daneis sace parler.
> Se ne sevent neient forz romanz,
> Mez à Bajues en a tanz
> Ki ne sevent parler se Daneis non;
> E pur ço, sire quens Boton,
> Voil ke vos l'aiez ensemble od vos
> E de li enseigner curios."

Which may be thus interpreted:

"If I cause him to be brought up at Rouen, he will not be able to speak Danish; for nobody there speaks that language. I wish that he should be so brought up that he may be able to speak to the Danes. Here they speak nothing but Romance. But at Bayeux there are many who can speak only Danish. Wherefore, Sir Boton, I wish that you should take him with you, and educate him carefully."

In the dialect, then, of the peasant of Bayeux, are most likely to be found any traces of the old Norman idiom and pronunciation, and of its modifications of the language which succeeded it. I will, therefore, transcribe part of the parable of the prodigal son, translated into the patois of Bayeux. It does not figure among the eighty versions of the same parable in various provincial dialects of France, published in the Memoirs of the French Society of Antiquaries.

"Un home aveit deux éfans, dont le pu ptiot dit a sen père, 'men père, bayez mei la part du bien qui m'rvient;' et le père leux en fit le partage. Dans treis jouors aprens, le pu jeune de deux éfans, ayant ramassé sen cas s'nallit fère un viage dans les poués étrangiers, ou y mongit tout sen cas en lequeries et en bombances.

"Quand tout fut coulé il arrivit une grande fameine dans le pouée et y c'menchit à ète dans la misère jusqu'au co. Alors y s'nallit et se mit au service d'un gros de pouée, qui l'enveyit à sa mouèson des camps por y garder les messieurs de seye. Là y n'avait pas sa vie, et la foim le poussait si fort qu'il eût bien voulu mongier de la mongeaille ès avers, mais no n'li permettait pas d'en prendre.

"Enfin y r'conut sa bétise et dit: Mais les valets de queux nous ont du poin tant qu'y veulent, et mei ichin je crève de foim. Y faut tout de sieute que j'mèn aille trouver men bon home de père, et que j' li dise; men père j'ai péchi cont le ciel, et cont vo; et je ne sieus pu dègne d'ète apelé vot fils. traitez mei com un de vos ptits valets."

M. Pluquet, in his work on Bayeux, from which I transcribe this, gives the whole parable; but this specimen will be sufficient to show the peculiarities of their dialect and pronunciation. They have, however, very many words which are not French at all, some evidently Scandinavian, and some the same formations as our own. For instance, "en plantè" signifies in plenty.

The Normans have long had the character of being lovers of litigation. This taste for

chicanery would seem to be of ancient date, and appears by no means to have decreased. Wace, the old canon of Bayeux, celebrates this propensity of his countrymen in the "Roman de Rou;" and that they have suffered no change in this respect is sufficiently evinced by the fact that the yearly average of causes tried in the arrondissement of Bayeux alone is three thousand! It is remarkable that the "campagnards" have the reputation of being the great lovers of law and litigation; while the townsmen are said to have much less of the litigious spirit.

Before leaving Bayeux we traversed the whole length of the principal street, and most of the others, as well as the market-place, for the express purpose of observing if the present race of inhabitants bear out the vaunt of the old Norman proverb—"Garçons de Caen. Filles de Bayeux!" But I must own that we were unable to detect any such beauty as could justify the "filles de Bayeux" in claiming any pre-eminence in this respect over their neighbours. That the Normans generally, indeed both men and women, are a much finer race than the inhabitants of any other part of France must be evident to any one passing through the country with his eyes open.

We left Bayeux for St. Lo about two o'clock. Our conveyance upon this occasion was an enormous overgrown sort of gig, with a ponderous head to it. This hybrid machine was —I cannot say calculated—but compelled to contain nine human beings, exclusive of the driver and their baggage. One seat for three persons occupied the hindmost part of the vehicle. This was accessible only by passing over the other seats and their occupants. Of light but little, and of air less, could penetrate to it. It was termed very appropriately the "fond de la voiture;" and was deemed the best place. We resigned it with much gallantry to two old ladies and one young one, who were returning from Bayeux market.

The second seat, immediately over the axle, was occupied by two St. Lo shopkeepers and an old "militaire;" who all offered one another snuff; and then entered on an animated and prolonged discussion of the propriety and probability of a match between queen Victoria and the second son of Louis Philippe. The berth they occupied was in one point of view a desirable one; as, from its central position, its occupants were less affected by the pitching of the machine.

We were, however, very well contented with our places on the front seat with the driver,

deeming its deficiencies in point of dignity amply compensated by the enjoyment of fresh air, " à discretion," and the power of egress and regress ad libitum.

The huge body of the carriage creaking and labouring with its load—the ten inmates and an extensive assortment of bandboxes, baskets, portmanteaus, and miscellaneous lumber, " among which we noticed" two or three hencoops, an old side-saddle, and the iron curtain-rods of a window, stowed away over head; all rested on two enormous wheels, and was dragged by one sleek and sturdy black horse in the shafts, assisted by a most miserable-looking half-starved grey, about a quarter the size of his big companion. This unfortunate supplement, tied on with an old rope, shuffled along by the side of the off-shaft; and though incapable of doing much towards drawing the load, yet was of considerable use to his fat friend, the stalwart black, by taking all the flogging; thus serving also to illustrate the advantages of the division of labour.

As we proceeded southward from Bayeux, the aspect of the country began to improve. The road was red instead of white; and the fields looked greener, more divided by hedges, and more sheltered by hedge-row timber. We soon passed through a part of the forest of

Cerisy, which appeared to contain a good deal of very fine timber. Here and there, openings in the wood showed us peeps of pretty, turf-grown, park-like glades, such as Watteau would have chosen to people with brocaded ladies, and Sir-Charles-Grandison-looking gentlemen.

It took us several long hours to make our short journey; but we arrived at St. Lo before our comrades in the rear had settled all the particulars of the royal alliance they were arranging; and they alighted from the vehicle, still chattering vociferously, and apparently rather regretting that their conference was brought to a conclusion.

CHAPTER VIII.

St. Lo — The Haras—Pleasing Mode of collecting a Poor-Rate — Fruit Market — High Mass—Valley of the Vire—Haymaking—Huguenots at St. Lo — St. Lo in Froissart's Time — Journey to Coutances—Musical Dinner Party—Women of Coutances — Les Piliers —The Cathedral—View from the Tower — Heauteville—Hambye — Perci — Villedieu — Controversy on the Origin of the Pointed Arch — Geoffry de Montbray.

St. Lo is a pretty, quiet, unpretending, clean, little town, with an old church, once a cathedral; an old ruin, once a castle; and a "haras," which was once a convent.

"Tempora mutantur; nos et mutemus in illis" has apparently been the motto of the inhabitants of St. Lo.

Our first stroll through the town chanced to bring us to the "haras," which is situated at one end of the "cours," or promenade, a luxury with which almost all French towns are graced. Our attention was attracted by some old grey walls, with arched doors and windows, and a little "jardin Anglais" in front of them. We inquired of an old

woman, who was filling her pitcher at a fountain in the cours, what old building that was.

"Celui-là? C'est le haras."

Now it so happened that neither my companion nor myself were acquainted with the word "haras," or had the remotest notion of the signification thereof. So we pursued our interrogatories with,

"Et qu' est ce que c'est qu' un haras, madame?"

"Mais, messieurs," answered the old lady, setting down her pitcher, and looking up inquisitively into our faces, "un haras est"—a long parenthesis of shrugs and gesticulations — "enfin, ce n'est rien que ce que vous voyez là."

With this satisfactory explanation we proceeded, laudably determined on the acquisition of information on this mysterious subject, to the building in question, and rung at the principal door. It was opened by a respectable farmer-looking sort of man, with much more the appearance of an Englishman than a Frenchman, who paused to hear our business.

"C'est un haras ceci, n'est ce pas, monsieur?"

"Oui, monsieur, c'est un haras;" said the

man, with a well-suppose-it-is-what-then sort of tone and look, turning from one to the other of us in quest of some further declaration of the object of our visit. But as this was not immediately forthcoming — for, in truth, not having the slightest notion of the nature of a "haras," we were at a loss what to say next—he at length added—

"Voulez vous entrer, messieurs, pour voir ce que nous avons ici; mais ce n'est pas beaucoup à present."

This exactly suited us, so we accepted the invitation with thanks, and soon discovered, what the reader probably knows, that a "haras" is an establishment for breeding horses. We moreover learnt that this was a royal haras, and that our conductor was the head-groom.

It seems that the French government are paying much attention to the improvement of their breed of horses. Royal establishments are maintained at several places. Horses of pure English, Arabian, and Spanish blood, are purchased, and races are established in many places with royal prizes. In some of the announcements of races which we saw, we observed carriage races enumerated among the sports. All this will, no doubt, have a beneficial effect on the miserably

backward state of French travelling. But they will never be able to approach the speed and convenience of our communications, as long as their posting is a government monopoly, and their stage-coaches forbidden to pass each other on the road.

There were not many horses at the establishment at St. Lo when we were there, but our conductor showed us a few remarkably beautiful creatures, assuring us, with much pride and satisfaction, as regarded one or two or them, that they were entirely French.

We left the ci-devant convent and its new inmates (an old English stallion, twenty-five years old, once well known, I believe, in this country by the name of "the Captain," had what was once the Abbot's dining-parlour all to himself as a loose box) and returned to our inn with the last of the light, intending to devote the morning of the next day to the further examination of St. Lo.

A bright sun and a merry peal of bells ushered in the following morning.

It was Sunday, and, moreover, the anniversary of the patron saint of the church. So all the gayest gowns, and whitest aprons, and most magnificently towering head-gear, were put in requisition; and the whole of the little town wore a holyday air of more than ordinary Sunday festivity.

We sallied forth among the happy-looking holyday folks, and took our way with the throng towards the church, which Mr. Gally Knight justly calls "a Durham in miniature." As we were crossing the "grande place," we were accosted by two pretty and prettily dressed girls, who were perambulating the town, arm in arm, carrying a plate between them, loaded with a quantity of small coins. It was "pour les pauvres, les vieux, et les malades," they said, and smilingly invited us to contribute to their store. "Tout le monde," they told us, gave something; and they should be very grateful for "quelque petite chose." Of course it was impossible to resist following the example of "all the world," especially so urged. We added, therefore, our mite to the already well-filled plate; and, thinking it no bad mode of ushering in the gladness of a Sunday morning, inquired of the pretty alms-gatherers if that were the weekly practice at St. Lo. But they said, "Oh no! it was only on *Château Dimanche*." The import of this phrase, however, I failed to learn.

Notwithstanding the sacred as well as holyday character of the day, we found the steps at the west end of the church, and the whole of the little parvis, occupied by a thronged and busy market. Vegetables,

eggs, butter, poultry, and fruit, were ranged in abundance on the steps of the church, and on the pavement in front of it, in the baskets in which they had been brought into the town; and, behind each little property, its owner seated on the ground, ceased not to expatiate volubly and loudly on the superior excellence of his own merchandise.

The steps of the church seemed appropriated almost exclusively to the fruit-dealers. Cherries were in the greatest abundance, but fine currants and strawberries were also plenty; and the latter fetched almost as good a price as they would have done in Covent Garden Market. After a little bargaining, rather for the fun of hearing the old woman's arguments in favour of her goods than for the liard in dispute, we became the purchasers of a plate of fine strawberries, which we carried off to our inn for breakfast, the seller screaming after us not to forget to bring back the plate, when we had eaten the contents.

When we had breakfasted, and duly returned the old woman her plate, we found "tout le monde" thronging to high mass at the principal church. So we entered with the crowd, and took our seats in the choir. The whole body of the church soon be-

came filled with a dense multitude, consisting almost entirely of women. The service was extremely long, and contained many additions to the usual office of the mass in honour of the saint of the day.

I observed here, and at other places in Normandy, some peculiarities in the ceremonial, which I have not seen in other Roman Catholic churches. During a great part of the service, three priests continued to walk backwards and forwards up and down the choir, chanting as they went; and, at the end of every psalm, a grotesquely-dressed individual, in a red cloth gown and square red cap, gave a loud clap with a leathern instrument, which he held for the purpose.

When we left the church at the end of the service, we strolled to the outskirts of the town, on the opposite side to that on which we had entered it, and were agreeably surprised at the beauty of the country in this direction. The little river Vire flows beneath the southern walls of St. Lo, which, on this side, crown the tops of some cliffs of considerable height. On this side, too, of the town, seated of course on the most commanding angle of the rock, are the remains of the old castle. These are but trifling; and, in an architectural point of view, of no interest.

But a grey, time-stricken wall, a hoary arch, or moss-grown fragment of a tower, are always picturesque objects, even on the bleakest plain. Hanging, however, as these do, over the wooded valley of the Vire, harmonizing well with the colour of the cliffs, and backed by the varied and irregular roofs and gables of the town, they constitute a landscape ready formed to the hand of the artist, and requiring no " coaxing " or addition from his inventive powers to compose a picture satisfactory to the most artistic eye.

We rambled a little way up this pretty valley, along the banks of the stream, and I longed much for power to transfer to paper, and carry away with me, half a dozen at least of the different combinations of wood, water, fields, rocks, and buildings, which it presented. Nor was the landscape deficient in figures in the most perfect and picturesque keeping.

The river is on the opposite side to the town, skirted by a small extent of rich and well irrigated meadow-land, occupying the space between the present course of the stream and the steep wooded bank, which was doubtless, at some former period, its boundary. The grass was now cut; and, though it was Sunday, and a high holyday at

St. Lo to boot, that prettiest of rural occupations, haymaking, was in active progress. I suppose that the rule which says "Make hay while the sun shines," was deemed by the farmer paramount to all others; for the sun certainly was shining most gloriously. I asked a man, who appeared to be overlooking the workmen, whether the St. Lo people did not think it wrong to labour on the day of rest.

"Pas pendant la moisson, monsieur," he replied.

Returning into the town, we once again, before quitting it, perambulated its principal streets, interested in the localities rather by the remembrance of deeds which have been done in them, and of the noble hearts and high stern courage which once abode there, than by aught which their present aspect has to offer. The inhabitants of St. Lo were among the earliest and steadiest adherents to Protestant principles in France; and the town was one of those which sent deputies to the memorable first synod of the reformed church, held at Paris in 1559. It was taken by storm by the catholic party, under M. de Matignon, in 1574; and was, as the catholic writers admit, "sacked with a horrible carnage."

It probably never recovered from the blow, for its wealth and importance appear to have been much greater in old times than they are at present. Tradition assigns its foundation to Charlemagne; and Froissart tells us that, when it was taken by Edward III in 1346, it "was a very rich and commercial town, and worth three such towns as Coutances * * * No one can imagine," he adds, "the quantity of riches they found in it, nor the number of bales of cloth."

It was about two o'clock, when we took our places in the "voiture commissionaire," bound for Coutances. This was a somewhat better description of vehicle than that great-grandfather of all gigs, which labours between Bayeux and St. Lo; and it performed the journey of about twelve or thirteen miles in the incredibly short space of three hours. The road runs through part of the Cotantin, a well-wooded undulating district, which produces of most of the necessaries of life more than its inhabitants consume, and wears a sufficiently smiling aspect, yet has not that appearance of high cultivation and extreme fertility that we so much admired in the Lieuvin.

We passed, not very far from Coutances, a remarkably pleasing and unusually comfort-

able-looking château, which occupies an eminence at a small distance from the road ; and were no little amused with our "cocher's" answer to the inquiries we made respecting it. It was the Château de Savigny, he said, " un assez beau séjour, il faut l'avouer, mais" . . . both the seigneur and his lady had been guillotined in the revolution . . . " *malheureusement* tous les deux ensemble, les pauvres diables!" added he, with a grimace and a shrug, which looked as if his shoulders were endeavouring to hold his own head fast in its place.

We descended from our voiture at Coutances just in time for the table d'hôte ; which important hour we found to our surprise throughout Normandy, and generally in the larger towns of Britanny, fixed as late as five o'clock. Our worthy great-grandfathers, were they condemned again to visit earth, would be obliged, sup where they might, to have recourse to Germany for their dinners.

We dined in the midst of a tremendous hubbub, caused by a vehement disputation on the musical talents of the different nations of Europe, performed by the whole of the assembled company. It appeared to be agreed on all hands, nem. con. of course, that the

French had by far the most perfect national taste for music, the most original talent for composition, and the most brilliant powers of execution. It was equally clear that the English were totally destitute of either genius to create, organs to execute, or taste to appreciate, harmony. But the difficult point was to determine the order of precedence in which the Germans and Italians ought to occupy the intermediate space between these extremes. The disputants themselves certainly did not appear to have much notion of the "sweet music of speech," at least; for such an abominable discord of harsh screams as they uttered in their vehement anxiety each to outshriek his neighbour, I never before heard. We did swallow our food in the midst of it; but digestion was altogether out of the question; so we bolted the last mouthful, and hurried into the comparative quiet of the street.

Coutances is celebrated for saints and pretty women; and truly it appears to deserve its reputation in both lines. The number of saints, martyrs, and hermits, it has given to the calendar exceeds that contributed by all the rest of Normandy together. And, as far as my observation could enable me to judge, I should say that it produced well-

formed figures, bright complexions, and large blue eyes, in nearly the same proportion.

The town is prettily situated, and its general appearance is clean and comfortable; but there is a pervâding air of having seen better days, and a total absence of business, or movement of any kind, that is chilling and cheerless.

We determined to devote the evening to a ramble in the environs of the town; and reserve the great lion of the place, the cathedral, for the next morning. The best view of Coutances is from the west; and the immediate neighbourhood is most pretty in this direction. The little river Soulle skirts the town on the southern side, and a nameless streamlet, flowing through the steep and narrow valley which bounds it on the west, falls into the river just below the walls. The view of the cathedral, pointing to the sky with its two superb steeples, either from the bottom of this valley or from the hill on the farther side of it, is very striking.

Our walk, however, had taken this direction in search of the remains of a Roman aqueduct, known in the neighbourhood by the name of "Les Piliers." We had no difficulty in finding them. There were the old arches still striding with giant steps across the

valley. Fifteen grass-grown pillars and five still perfect arches remain. But they are pointed arches! Dr. Dibdin says that one end of the aqueduct has been "gothicized." But it is difficult to understand when or wherefore such an alteration should have taken place, or how a round arch could have been changed to a pointed one without rebuilding the whole fabric. Mr. Turner says that these remains, though commonly ascribed to the times of Roman power, are said to be with more justice referable to a nobleman of the family of Haye-Paisnel, and to have been erected in the thirteenth century.

Six o'clock the next morning found us on the top of the central tower of the cathedral. With what a joyous and exulting exhilaration does the eye sweep the vast panorama, and the cheek meet the fresher breeze, when, a little out of breath with the long ascent, and, bending low beneath the little turret doorway, one emerges on the leads of some fair tower! Perhaps there are people not conscious of any such sensation; but to me there is something very exciting in standing on such a spot, with a fine brisk breeze blowing my hat from my head, my hair from my forehead, and the tears into my eyes!

A glorious and magnificent panorama is

that spread beneath the proud towers of Coutances. Landward and seaward, all is beautiful. To the west, four miles of undulating wooded country forms the foreground. Beyond it the eye rests on the sea, with the white crests of the waves, and the glancing sails of St. Helier's fishing-boats glittering in the sun, and Jersey looming high in the distance. More to the south, the bold and almost isolated rock of Granville, standing out from the coast like an advanced guard into the sea, and the little island of Chaussey, arrest the gaze for a moment, as the eye wanders onwards over many a mile of sea, till it rests at length on the long low line of the shore of Britanny.

Then, turning to the east, we give our backs to the jovial boisterous breeze, shake the drops from our eyes, draw our breath, and prepare to look more leisurely at the varied and storied scenery of the landward prospect.

And what a country it is to look over! How rich in all that can please the eye, excite the fancy, and interest the mind! The wide extent of sunny uplands and shaded dells, chequered by verdant pastures and yellow corn-lands, and studded with many a village, tells no tales, save of plenty, peace, and con-

tented happiness. But, could the old tower speak its reminiscences and tell us of all that it has looked down on, how different would be the tale! how various the phantasmagoric repeopling of the scene! From the first over-running of the country by Roman legions, to the heart-rending destruction of the chivalrous peasants of La Vendée, how blood-stained is the page which records the history of these fields! The Celt, the Norman, and the Englishman, the religious bigot, and the atheist demagogue, have, in turn, ravaged, wasted, and saturated them with blood. Barbarian ferocity, and civilized ambition, merciless bigotry, and blood-thirsty republicanism, have vied with one another in disfiguring the fair face of nature, and defeating her bounteous provision for human happiness.

Once more her wounds are healed, and peace is smiling. Yet once again the fields are clothed with culture, and the earth brings forth her increase. Are we doomed yet again to see the bountiful provision for so much happiness marred anew by fresh wars and more devastation? Surely we have all fought battles enough to talk of and write books about to the end of our national lives. We are very glorious, and need no further glorifying. Surely even "la grande nation" must

be tired of "la gloire," and must have learnt at length to prize "the pride, pomp, circumstance of glorious" *peace.*

Several of the villages of the Cotantin, over which the tall tower of Coutances looks, are connected with names of high historic interest. To the north-east is the humble little village of Hauteville, from which the immortalized Tancred and his six stalwart sons went forth to conquer kingdoms. Seven niches in the wall of the cathedral were occupied before the revolution by their seven statues.

To the south-east is Hambye, the early seat of the de Pagnels, a branch of whom settled in England after the conquest, and gave their name to the town of Newport Pagnel in Northamptonshire.

About three leagues to the south-east of Hambye is Percy—the cradle of Northumberland's dukes—a name linked with a thousand associations in history and romance. It cannot but raise a feeling of admiration for these northern ancestors of our's, to find their villages and hamlets thus sending forth conquerors, kings, and nobles, throughout Europe.

A little beyond Percy is a place of a very different celebrity — the little town of Ville-

dieu. It has been, from a very early period, the seat of an extensive manufacture of copper, which has acquired for it the surname of "Les Pöeles." The traveller passing Villedieu les Pöeles might deem it a plague-spot on the land, marked for their own by the withering touch of disease and death. The following striking and accurate description of the blasted spot is to be found in the French Encyclopædia, under the head of "dangerous qualities of copper."

"Ce qui arrive au bourg de Ville-dieu les Pöeles, prove que le cuivre peut être volatilisé par le feu suspendu dans l'atmosphère. On n'y voit que des corps hideux et en consomption. Leurs visages, leurs cheveux, ressemblent à ceux des statues d'airain. La surdité, l'aveuglement, l'engourdissement des sens, le tremblement, attaquent tous les âges. Le principe de ce désastre est la nature métallique de l'air qu'on y respire, et des aliments. Le lieu est habité par mille chaudronniers, qui ne cessent d'infecter l'air, le pain, et la boisson du venin qu'ils forgent eux-mêmes. Des fourneaux allumés vomissent continuellement des flammes; des ruisseaux d'airain en découlent. On plonge de tous cotés dans l'eau le métal enflammé; une vapeur épaisse et enivreuse s'élève de toutes parts, et repand

au loin les maux et la désolation. Les coups des marteaux redoublés forment une espèce de gémissement lugubre; les maisons en sont ébranlés; les vallées voisines en retentissent; la terre en frémit. On croirait être dans l'antre de Vulcain. N'allez pas arrêter imprudemment les Cyclopes Normands, en leur demandant l'heure; ils vous jetteraient leurs marteaux à la tête."

When, after often turning our gaze from east to west, from land to sea, and from the scrutiny of the town beneath us to half imaginary discoveries in the far horizon, we at length signified to our shivering cicerone that we were satisfied and ready to descend, the interior of the church still remained to be admired.

This cathedral is one of the buildings which the Norman Society of Antiquaries adduce in support of their assertion, that the pointed style obtained in Normandy as early as the middle of the eleventh century. This hypothesis has given rise to a great deal of contention among the learned. Much ink has been shed, and many a goodly volume sent forth, in support of the opinions of either party; whereby all the disputants are by this time convinced that they were right from the

first, and that their opponents know nothing about the matter.

Opinion on this side the Channel seems to be generally against the Norman claims to so high an antiquity for their earliest pointed architecture. Mr. Gally Knight, who visited Normandy expressly to form his own opinion on the subject, came to the conclusion that the existence of the pointed style in Normandy so early as the middle of the eleventh century is purely imaginary. And Dr. Milner, another high authority, maintains that the origin of the pointed style must be sought in England.

It is certain that a cathedral was founded at Coutances in 1030, under the auspices of Bishop Robert, whose successor, Geoffry de Montbray, completed and dedicated it in 1056. The question, therefore, is, whether the edifice as we now see it be the work of Geoffry de Montbray, or the result of subsequent repairs and reconstructions.

But it is not with the least intention of being learned on this long mooted question, on which the doctors so widely disagree, that I have alluded to Geoffry de Montbray and his cathedral of Coutances; but solely with the view of introducing Geoffry himself to the reader.

He is a notable specimen of that fine race of Normans, whose energy of character, in whatever direction it was exerted, caused them to excel in all they undertook. The page of history, which records their military achievements, might be mistaken for that, which embodies the unreal creations of romance; while the noble edifices, which still make Normandy the most interesting country in Europe to the antiquary and lover of architecture, are the result of the same male energy of character employed on the arts of peace.

Geoffry de Montbray was truly one of those Normans of whom William of Malmsbury says, that they deemed that day lost, which they did not occupy in advancing some magnificent work. He was appointed to the see of Coutances in the year 1048; and the darling object of his whole subsequent life was the erection, preservation, and embellishment of his cathedral.

There is an account of his administration of the bishopric, written about a hundred and sixty years after his death, which is printed in the eleventh volume of the Gallia Christiana. The historian states him to have been "nobilium Baronum prosapiâ ortus, statura procerus, vultu decorus, prudentia

consilioque providus." He was related also to the Conqueror, and was by him selected to perform mass preparatory to the battle of Hastings, and to preach at his coronation; for which services he received from him, as Ordericus Vitalis tells us, no less than two hundred and eighty manors in England. You can scarcely search the history of any English county without finding, among the accounts of the descent of property since the conquest, the name of Geoffry de Montbray. He is a perfect Marquis de Carabbas.

The Norman historian, however, is anxious to assert that these English riches were not the means, by which his cathedral was raised. "Nor did the venerable bishop perform this work, as some think, out of the plentiful abundance of his English superfluities. For when he was poor, and when the revenues of the bishopric were so diminished that the servants of his household eat bread of second quality, even in those days he pushed on the building of his church." He undertook a voyage to Apulia expressly to obtain from Robert Guiscard and his companions funds for carrying on the building. And the historian tells us that, "even when the church did not possess in the city so much as a house for the bishop, or stabling for his horse, and

when his own lodging was an humble appendage attached to the walls of the church" (quoddam appendicium humile, quod pendebat de parietibus ecclesiæ) even then by his prudence and probity he contrived to purchase for the church the better half of the town of Duke William for three hundred pounds.

When the buildings of the present day are contrasted with the noble constructions of the "*dark*" ages, we usually hear our humiliating inferiority, and the wonder of the marvellous piles, which we admire but cannot imitate, summarily accounted for by a few vague phrases about the cheapness of labour, and vastness of ecclesiastical wealth in those days. But the history of our good Bishop of Coutances may serve to show us that these monuments of piety were not raised by any such Aladdin's-lamp sort of process as many persons seem to think; that they were not accomplished without severe sacrifices, rigid self-denial, and the untiring and high-principled devotion of the labour and energy of a life to the good work; that they were accomplished, in short, by precisely those means which might command, at the present day, results at least equally stupendous and ennobling—if we had among us a little of the spirit of "*the dark ages*."

The true cause of the difference between our works and their's is simply this—that the unenlightened Geoffry de Montbrays, and William of Wykehams of those barbarous days, never even thought of calculating how much per cent their great works would pay, or considered whether the shares would ever bear a premium!

But to return to our Bishop. After a life unintermittingly devoted to his one great object, we find him in his last hours exhibiting, as might be expected, "the ruling passion strong in death," and expending his last energies in beautifying and caring for the future fortunes of his beloved church. Of course so great and good a man could not in those days leave the world without warning signs and prodigies. The monkish chronicler accordingly tells us that, "when the day of his glorification drew nigh, in the year 1091, the grief and desolation of the church of Coutances was foreshadowed by evident signs." An earthquake and thunder-storm so shook the cathedral, that the gilded cock, which surmounted the great tower, was thrown down; many stones were shaken from their places, and considerable damage done to the building. These ominous signs were at first variously applied by different

persons. But the evident approach of the bishop to his end, shortly after, soon left no room for doubt as to their real signification.

He was seized with illness on the eve of the assumption of the blessed Virgin. Nevertheless, a messenger having arrived in the course of that same night to request him to perform the burial service at the funeral of his relative, Count Nigel, he set out on his journey for that purpose, ill as he was, on the next morning. Active to the last in the discharge of his duties, he consecrated a church during this journey; and, returning by St. Lo, he was detained there by his increasing illness some days.

Having, at length, once more reached his dear Coutances, he caused himself to be carried into the cathedral, and, having there made a public confession of his sins, he employed the rest of his time in preparing for death.

"The venerable bishop, therefore," proceeds the chronicler, "seeing that his death was at hand, and grieving for the dilapidations of his church, sent into England, and called to him Brisenetus, the plumber. He then caused all the rents in the church to be plumbed, and the turrets to be repaired; and the gilded cock, which the aforesaid lightning had destroyed, to be carefully restored and

replaced upon the tower. So, when he heard that the gilded cock was safe, and mounted on its old place upon the tower, he gave thanks to God, saying, after he had done so, I was afraid that, if my death had occurred before it was accomplished, neither that cock or its like would ever have mounted that tower."

"Voilà bien," remarks M. de Gerville on this passage, "le propos d'une personne, qui avait toujours été, et qui était encore tout entière à son affaire."

Having thus employed his life, even to its last hour, in building and preserving his church, it only remained to provide, as far as he possibly could, for its well-being when he should no longer be able to watch over it. This he does, after the manner and in the spirit of the times, by dictating with his latest breath a blessing on its defenders and protectors, and a curse on its enemies.

This instrument is witnessed in due form by the prelates, who were present at his death and funeral—Odo of Bayeux, Michel of Avranches, William of Durham, and by sundry abbots. As it is a sufficiently curious specimen of the habits and feelings of those times, I will translate it, at the risk of being thought somewhat tedious.

He begins by stating that, having done all in his power for his church during his life, and being now unable to do aught more for it by deeds, he therefore wishes, as far as may be possible, to protect and defend it for evermore by words.

"Whoever, therefore," he proceeds, "professing the christian faith, shall have honoured, comforted, and defended the aforesaid church, may he, being blessed by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ and his most holy mother, and by our Apostolical confirmation, receive from the same Lord Jesus Christ, the recompenser of all good men, a reward in futurity; and may his soul have rest in Paradise, amid the choirs of Angels and Archangels, Apostles and Martyrs, Confessors and Virgins.

"But if any irreverent and injurious man, actuated by the stings of avarice and cupidity, shall have presumed to lessen or curtail it of its lands, or laws and customs, or ornaments, (unless for the just and necessary cause of the aforesaid church, and with the consent of the clergy thereof)—may he, being cursed by all the above-mentioned heavenly host, and hedged around by the anathema of perpetual damnation, appear openly to all men the perpetrator of so great a sacrilege by the most

terrible divine judgments pursuing him in this life; and throughout eternity may he dwell in everlasting fire, together with the traitor Judas, Herod, Pilate, and Caiaphas, and all the adversaries of the Holy Church; may he be for ever tormented by the devil and his angels, and for ever and ever be deemed unworthy of a spark of mercy, unless his black soul shall have repented before its separation from the body, and he shall have made satisfaction. So be it. Amen."

"And all the clergy and the people responded, Amen."

Thus lived, thus died, Geoffry de Montbray. Though somewhat shorn of its splendour by those who recked as little of the good bishop's blessing as of his curse, the monument, which he thus raised (though assuredly not with that intention) to himself, and for which alone he lived, still crowns with beauty the hill of Coutances, and remains the pride and the boast of the quiet little town, which clusters beneath it.

CHAPTER IX.

Journey from Coutances to Granville — Reminiscences of the Attack on Granville by the Vendeans — Arrival of a Boat-load of Tourists from Jersey — Hill of Avranches — Difficulty of finding Accommodations — Site of the Cathedral — Anecdote from its Archives—Bishop Cenau on Flowing Tresses and Favoris—William Postel—Calendar of Tiphaine la Fée—Language spoken in the Avranchin.

From Coutances to Granville the distance is about twenty-five miles, which we performed by means of "la petite diligence," in something less than five hours. It was what is usually called "a lovely day;" which means that the thermometer stands at eighty-six in the shade. The sun glared from a cloudless sky, and the white, dusty, shadeless and provokingly excellent road sent back the rays of heat so faithfully reflected, that we seemed to be between two fires. It was one of those days, in short, when one enters into the feelings of dogs, who go mad.

Under these circumstances, perhaps, my testimony as to the uninteresting tediousness

and monotony of this journey ought not to be too implicitly received. But, most assuredly, I never was more heartily glad to arrive at the end of a journey, than I was to find myself at the end of this preternaturally long twenty-five miles.

A delicious sea-breeze greeted us as we mounted the isolated promontory, on which the little citadel is built, and gave us sufficient life and energy to examine the remarkable position and not uninteresting localities of the town.

Here it was that the chivalrous peasants, and gallant gentlemen of La Vendée, after an all but successful attempt to take the town, found themselves compelled to abandon the hope of pushing northwards into Normandy. From this point commenced the disastrous retreat of this unfortunate expedition.

The project of attacking Granville had been anxiously discussed by the Vendean leaders; and many among them, especially their young commander-in-chief, the noble-hearted Larochejaquelin, were opposed to it. But it was urged that there was no hope of putting down the republicans without the assistance of England, with whom it was impossible to communicate, unless they could get possession of some sea-port. It was hoped, more-

over, that the possession of Granville would enable them to send over to England the crowd of priests, old men, women, and children, which consumed the provisions and embarrassed the movements of the army.

Still Larochejaquelin was unconvinced. The boy-general knew well the materials, of which his army was composed. He repeated again and again, in that fateful council of brave and loyal hearts, that the peasants of La Vendée, excellent and brave soldiers as they had shown themselves in a desultory warfare of skirmishes and sudden onsets, were totally unfit for the exigences of a siege; that Granville was by its position effectually secured against a coup de main, and that it was of the utmost importance to avoid checking by the least reverse the confidence and ardour of their men.

The sequel showed but too well how correctly his opinions had been formed.

The attack on Granville was, however, decided on by a majority of voices, on the 7th of November, 1793. Larochejaquelin surrounded the town with his thirty thousand peasants. The attack commenced on the 14th of November, at nine o'clock in the evening, and was carried on with the most determined and desperate valour for thirty-six hours.

Of the details and melancholy results of this unfortunate siege, it is needless to speak. There are few readers, who have not sympathized with the sufferings of these devoted men in the pages of Madame de Larochejaquelin's delightful Mémoires.

But it is interesting to compare the facts she so simply states with the testimony offered by the features of the place. These speak plainly to the most unpractised eye the almost desperate nature of the attempt. The spot is still pointed out, at which a body of the besiegers attempted and very nearly succeeded in mounting the face of the wall by forcing their bayonets in between the stones, and then using them as steps.

Another attack was made from the port at low water, which, judging from the appearance of the place, might have stood a somewhat better chance of success. But here they were so unfortunate as to find two corvettes just arrived from St. Malo, which opened their fire upon them, and obliged them speedily to abandon the attempt.

It was not till after we had made the tour of the little town, and examined with much interest the points to which the royalist army directed their principal attacks, that we began to think of pursuing our way to Avran-

ches. We intended to find our quarters for the night at that town, and we had, therefore, another twenty-four miles to traverse before nightfall.

There seemed to be some danger, moreover, that all the conveyances, of which there are many, would be full. For it was the day of the arrival of the steam-boat from Jersey to Granville — a day of much importance and bustle to the little town. The Ariadne had brought a boat-load of eager pleasure-hunters from Jersey and Guernsey, who for the most part intended to proceed to Avranches without delay. Thence they probably would proceed to Pontorson, perhaps visit Mont St. Michel, pass on to Dol, and thence to Dinan. There embarking on a pretty little steamer, which plies on a very pretty little stream, they reach St. Malo, where once again stepping on board the Ariadne, which runs alternately to Granville and St. Malo, they so return to their island homes.

We succeeded, however, at length, in obtaining two seats in the front of one of their enormous cabriolets, and moreover profited by the delay, which had arisen, as we made our journey in consequence in the cool of the evening. The country is prettier on this side of Granville than on the other. The road is

almost lined with chesnut trees, whose dark and luxuriant foliage gives a richness of verdure to the general aspect of the country, which scarcely any other tree produces in an equal degree.

We reached Avranches about eight — that is, we reached the bottom of the steep hill, on which the town is built. Here we left our voiture to make its way up the long zig-zags of the road as it might, while we proceeded upwards in a more direct line. Yet it reached its destination before us; for so many pretty spots invited us to deviate a little from our path upwards, and such a variety of changeful effects of the failing light upon the richly wooded scenery caused us to pause awhile to look around and beneath us, that it was fairly dark, when we entered the town of Avranches.

And here it seemed for some time as if our "lodgings" were to "be on the cold ground;" for not a bed was to be found! The town was occupied not only by the flight of Jerseyites, who had arrived here an hour or more before us, but also by a large detachment of undergraduates from Oxford, all come to read during the vacation for a double first. However, after a good deal of wandering about the town, we succeeded at length in obtain-

ing possession of two beds, which had been reserved for some expected Jerseyites, who had not appeared to claim them.

The first half hour of our next morning's ramble sufficed to shew us that Avranches, as far as beauty is concerned, might well be an attractive summer's residence. The extent of country, which the eye looks over from the gardens and terraces of the town, embracing the valleys of the Sée and the Selune, is extremely pretty. Nor is the town itself void of objects of curiosity and interest. The cathedral—for Avranches was a bishop's see before the all-destroying revolution — the cathedral is no more. The ruins of it even have almost entirely disappeared. But the noble terrace on which it stood is still the most remarkable spot in the town, and remains bare and unoccupied, to make one regret the more that such a superb site should have been despoiled of the edifice, which adorned and sanctified it.

Among the archives of this church—a vast mass, composed chiefly of dates and names, and tales of miracles, and deeds of gift to various ecclesiastical foundations, yet containing many notices curious from the light they throw on old manners, or amusing from their naïve simplicity — there is recorded one

memorable scene, especially interesting to an English reader.

It was in front of this church that Henry II. of England met the pope's legates to answer before them the charge of Becket's murder. He had met them a few days before at Savigny, and had then left the assembly in anger. But Henry's fear of the Church, both on religious and political grounds, was too strong to permit him to remain long in open rebellion against the pope. He sent a message to the legates, promising to appear before them with all submission at Avranches; and, as if desirous of rendering his humiliation as complete and as painful as possible, he requested that the ceremony might be put off till the next week, in order that his son might be a witness of his penitence.

On Sunday, May 22, 1172, the humbled monarch, outside the church, in the presence of many of his nobles, made the humiliating submission required of him as the price of absolution for a deed, of which he still declared himself innocent. Standing by the altar, which had been temporarily erected for the purpose, and placing his hand upon the gospel, he said: "I swear that I neither ordered nor wished the murder of my archbishop. When I heard of it, I was extremely

grieved. *I never felt so strongly the death of my father or my mother.*"

The ecclesiastical historians are particular in stating that these last words were not *exacted* by the legates, but were added by his own will. He went on to say that he would, nevertheless, submit himself to any punishment the legate might think proper to inflict. For he admitted that, though innocent of any such intention, he might yet have been the cause of the murder, by having given others reason to think that Becket's death would be acceptable to him.

He promised to maintain two hundred knights for the space of one year in the Holy Land; and to go himself to fight against the Moors in Spain, if the Holy Father thought fit to command him to do so.

The triumph of Rome was complete. The king, kneeling at the door of the church on a stone (which is still pointed out to the curious), received the dearly-bought absolution. The great western doors of the cathedral were opened, and the royal penitent was admitted within them, as a type and token of his having been once again received into the body of the universal church.

In reading the account of this scene in the annals of Baronius, it is impossible not to re-

mark the offensively triumphant tone of gratified pride which runs through his minute recital.

Avranches has reckoned several men of note among her bishops. In the sixteenth century, Bishop Cenau, or Cenalis, as the name was latinized, had the honour of drawing down upon himself the indignation and unmeasured abuse of Calvin. He calls the bishop a dog, a rogue, a Cyclops, and ends with a wretched pun upon his name — " Ut nomini suo respondeat Cenalis, ad culinam revertitur." Besides his controversial works, Bishop Cenau composed a history of France, and a work intituled " La Hierarchie de la Normandie," and another upon weights and measures. Besides all this, he occupied himself much with regulating the details of the ecclesiastical discipline of his diocese. He was a great enemy of long hair and long beards. He goes so far as to insinuate that a long beard will be very much against a man at the last day.

Tessera nunc sceleris barba est, indexque futuri
Criminis aut certe conscia præteriti.
Nos vocat ad mores author pietatis ovillos,
Hircinos abigit, damnat, abesse jubet.
In dextram sibi nos servat Deus—inque sinistram
Hirsutum exsibilat, barbatulumque pecus.

He was as determined an enemy of stream-

ing locks as Prynne himself. But one of the arguments he uses to induce his priests to trim their tresses suggests a not altogether pleasing idea of the manner and habits of those times. "Life is altogether too short," he urges, "to permit a long and precious time to be wasted in chasing the inhabitants of such a luxurious forest of hair."—"Dumque a sui capillitii sylvâ subnascentes feras abegunt, annus est."

The celebrated William Postel was born near Avranches. Among many other writings, some highly curious, he published a work intituled "Demonstration très-claire que Dieu a plus de solicitude de la France, qu'il n'a de tous les états temporels." This modest production is all about Jeanne d'Arc; and a living French author, speaking of the same subject, calls it "un excellent ouvrage," and adds "il y *prouve* que Jeanne d'Arc etait inspirée de Dieu."

In the public library at Avranches there exists a very curious calendar on vellum. It is a work of the fourteenth century, and is attributed, not without a great deal of probability, to Tiphaine, the wife of the celebrated Duguesclin. Her maiden name was Raguenel, and she was the daughter of the Vicomte de Bellière. She is much spoken of

by the chroniclers of the times, as a prodigy of wit, wisdom, and beauty — praises which they always sum up by saying that, in short, she was worthy to be the wife of Bertrand Duguesclin. The MS. was brought from Mont St. Michel, which was the residence of the lady for several years during the absence of her husband in Spain. This remote and isolated spot was chosen by herself for her retirement, with a view to the facilities it offered as an observatory; and so well did she profit by them, and so profound was the insight she attained into the science of astrology, that she acquired the style and title of Tiphaine-la-Fée. The Calendar in question, then, is supposed to be the result of this noble lady's astronomical and astrological labours. At the beginning of each month, a Latin verse points out the unlucky days, and another indicates the most important astronomical facts. Thus of January the first and seventh were to be dreaded—

"Jani prima dies et septima fine timetur."

Then follows

"Principium Jani sancit tropicus Capricorno."
"Januarius habet dies xxxi—luna xxx."
"Nox habet xvii horas et dies vii."

Most of the astrological predictions are in rhyming verse.

February—

"Quarta subit mortem, prosternit tertia fortem."

On the fourth of February the birds begin to sing—"Incipiunt aves canere;" on the fifth of June they cease—"Desinunt aves cantare."

In April Death was especially busy on the tenth and eleventh.

"Denus et undenus est mortis vulnere plenus."

Of June, the tenth was enough to make a man look blue; but the fifteenth knew no bounds to its evil influence.

"Denus pallescit—quindenus federa nescit."

Of July, the tenth lays you low; the thirteenth finishes you.

"Tredecimus mactat Julii—decimus labefactat."

On the first of August Death overcomes the strong man, and on the second is among the multitude

"Prima necat fortem—perditque secunda cohortem."

The third and tenth of September are to be dreaded by rheumatic patients.

"Tertia Septembris et denus fert mala membris."

In October the third and tenth are as bad as death in a foreign land.

"Tertius et denus est sicut mors alienus."

The fifth of November, it seems, always was an unlucky day, and the third was not much better.

"Scorpius est quintus, et tertius est nece cinctus."

The seventh of December was unhealthy, but the tenth was as poisonous as a viper.

"Septimus exsanguis, virosus denus ut anguis."

Such are the predictions of Tiphaine-la-Fée, on which it may be observed, however unlucky the marked days may have been, in other respects they fell very luckily for the exigencies of Dame Tiphaine's Latin hexameters, which would have been rather thrown out if the unfortunate days had been so perversely unfortunate as to have fallen in the latter half of the month.

This, however, was not invariably the case, for we are told that the learned lady had given to her husband Du Guesclin certain tablets in which were marked all the unlucky days, on which he was on no account to undertake any enterprize; and the tradition goes that, when all was lost on the evening of the fatal fight of Auray, which took place on the 29th of September, 1364, he looked too late at his wife's tablets, and there found that he was especially warned against that day.

The language spoken in the Avranchin is said to be peculiarly pure and elegant, and to present a remarkable contrast in this respect to the dialect of the Cotentin, which joins it on the north, and that of the Isle et

Vilaine towards the south. The first still testifies the Danish origin of the race who speak it, and the latter is yet more strongly tinctured by the Breton, which it replaced at a much later epoch. In the twelfth century, Avranches was celebrated for its trouvères. The little court, which Henry, the younger son of the Conqueror held at Avranches, was principally composed of a knot of poets. It is said, too, that at Avranches first were acted those scriptural dramas, which under the name of mysteries became so favourite a pastime in the earlier part of the middle ages.

CHAPTER X.

Expedition to Mont St. Michel—Nature of the Sands — A Norman Guide—Disastrous Sequel of our Expedition—Arrival at Pontorson—Remarkable Passage in the Life of Tiphaine-la-Fée — Virtues of a Char-à-banc — Interview of the Duc de Richemont and His Brother John of Britanny — Notice of the Quicksands of the Couesnon eight hundred years ago—Arrival at Dol.

After a long day spent in poking among the traces of antiquity, which are to be found at Avranches, and, rambling about the hill, on which it stands, we made our arrangements before going to bed for paying a visit the next day to Mont St. Michel. We were directed to a guide, who undertook to carry us in a cabriolet with a pair of horses across the sands to the sacred mount, and thence to Pontorson, a little town on the frontiers of Normandy and Britanny.

These sands are notoriously dangerous, of very considerable extent, and intersected in every direction by little arms of the sea: the chances are ten to one that a person unac-

quainted with the localities would lose his way; although this might seem impossible to a stranger who sees an apparently unbroken extent of sand before him, and the mount rising from the midst of it, at a distance, as it seems, of a mile at most, but which, in fact, is three or four leagues; and this losing the way, or only missing it for a time, is disagreeable when the nearest terra firma is three or four miles off, and the tide coming in with a rapidity, as it sometimes does over these sands, that exceeds that of a fleet horse.

But this is not the worst of it. Five small rivers, the Sée, the Selune, the Thar, the Guintre, and the Couesnon, fall into the bay, and have to find their way across the vast extent of level sand.

The waters of these streams, sinking beneath the surface, and in a great measure finding their way under it, form most dangerous quicksands, which, to make the matter still worse, are continually shifting their position.

The sacred mount, therefore, would seem to be effectually guarded from the unhallowed intrusion of strangers.

We were assured, however, that with a proper guide there was no danger at all, that

these men made it their business to ascertain from day to day the state of the sands, and that, by following a certain route known to them, the journey might safely be made in a cabriolet.

We agreed, therefore, with the guide, to whom we were recommended, to start at nine the next morning, that being, he said, the most favourable hour with reference to the tide; and at nine we were ready to leave Avranches. Not so, however, was our guide. We found upon inquiry that, after we had left him the night before, he had taken some travellers to Granville, and had only returned at four o'clock in the morning, that he was still in bed and fast asleep. But he would be ready to set off with us, his wife said, *as soon as ever he waked.*

This was rather too much. We insisted on mounting to his chamber, and bringing about this consummation without delay; but that his fond wife would not hear of. We succeeded, however, in disturbing his rest by dint of nearly battering the door down; but all our indignation and reproaches failed to cause the least disturbance in his equanimity, or the smallest acceleration of his movements. He swore that it was perfectly impossible to start at nine; that the sands would not yet

be passable; and, when we asked him, why, if that were the case, he had himself named nine the night before, he said, with the utmost coolness, that he always told travellers that he should start an hour or so before he really meant to do so, in order that they might be sure to be ready. This silenced us; and, giving up as a bad job any farther attempt to impress upon the imperturbable Norman a sense of his enormities, we returned to the inn to see that our baggage was all ready. But no baggage was to be found. After a great deal of inquiry, we learnt that in all probability it had been put into the diligence, which had gone to St. Malo.

The fact is, that in those parts of France, where the current of English summer tourists sets the strongest, the innkeepers, waiters, porters, and chambermaids, are during that period in a state of rabid excitement, approaching insanity. It must have been in this condition that some over-driven porter had laid violent hands on our effects, and sent them to St. Malo, without knowing what he was doing, being nearly beside himself with the conflicting orders and inquiries of three or four different parties of English, not half of which he understood, but from all of whom he hoped to receive fourfold the usual

price of his services, if he could succeed in the somewhat intricate task of performing their various behests. This very disagreeable contretemps, as we thought it at the time, the sequel of our adventures proved it to be a most fortunate accident.

At about ten o'clock we left Avranches in a huge cab with two horses, arranged à la française, that is, with one big one in the shafts, and one little one tied on with ropes outside. We jogged on quietly for about a league, among the rich fields and shady lanes of the Avranchin, and then found ourselves on the margin of the miniature sandy desert we were about to traverse. We had been progressing at that sort of little shambling run, which, joined to the conformation of springs peculiar to French cabs, imparts to the bodies of persons conveyed in them a mandarin sort of motion, which would lead a savage of mechanical genius to conclude that the bodies so moving were the primum mobile of the entire machine; and the league we had accomplished had cost us nearly an hour, so that it was eleven o'clock by the time we entered upon the sands.

While we were on terra firma I had no objection to our driver going to sleep. I knew it made not the slightest difference, whether

he was asleep or awake, as far as his functions as driver were concerned; but when we commenced our pathless course across the sands, I thought it advisable that our guide should be awake. I, therefore, commenced very perseveringly jerking my elbow into his ribs, and asking him a variety of questions concerning our route; but I could get nothing out of him, but an occasional half-articulated "pas de danger," and then the brute snored again. Thus we proceeded for about another hour, during which we had crossed, without difficulty, one of the little rivers. It was very rapid, but the water did not come above the boxes of the wheels. We now had to ford another somewhat larger stream. In we drove, but we had hardly got about a third part of the way over, when the carriage began very perceptibly to sink. Our lethargic driver now roused himself, and commenced a most desperate attack upon his horses, belabouring them furiously with the heavy handle of his whip, but still vociferating all the time "Pas de danger! soyez tranquilles! ne bougez pas!" The horses did their best, and struggled desperately, but their bodies were already deep in the stream, which was running very fast, and their utmost efforts failed to advance us more than a yard farther.

They then seemed to abandon the attempt, and remained perfectly quiet, only snorting a little. The water was now filling the lower part of the body of the carriage, which was still gradually, though very perceptibly, sinking. We began to think that it was high time to cry "Sauve qui peut!" and a minute afterwards I found myself plunging about in the stream, scarcely able to keep my legs. For, though the water was not up to my shoulders, my legs were entangled in the loose sand, and the stream was running so fast as to puzzle me extremely. Conceiving the distance to the bank we had left behind to be less than the other, I at first attempted to get out of the water in that direction, but I plunged about, getting deeper and more involved in the sand every instant. I began not to like it at all, when I heard my companion calling to me; and, turning, I saw that he had succeeded in reaching the opposite bank. I, therefore, changed my plan of action, and, after a few violent efforts, I found the bottom getting firmer under my feet, and then easily succeeded in walking out of the stream on that side. All this time our trusty guide, who never once stretched a hand or even uttered a syllable to assist or direct us, was in the water, holding on to the end of the shaft

of his still sinking vehicle, which, though all hope of saving it was gone, he was unwilling to abandon; and, his philosophy and imperturbability having quite deserted him, was bellowing "Au secours!" and sobbing like a child. The horses had now only their heads and necks above water, and every now and then struggled violently with their fore-legs. In this state of things it was quite useless to attempt getting any information from him, as to the direction we ought to take to the coast at the nearest point, or where we were most likely to find any assistance. To all such questions, bawled out to him from the bank, he returned no other answer than his reiterated "Au secours!"

Fortunately his cries had been heard by some peasants, who were upon the sands searching for shrimps in the little channels and pools, and whom we now saw running towards us. The first who came up was a woman, who undertook to guide us to land. Her companions soon arrived, and we left them to do the best they could with the carriage and horses. Following our bare-legged guide, who went off at a good trot, we soon reached once more the greensward without any fresh disasters. But we were wet, and covered with sand. We made the best of our

way to the nearest farm-house, where we found the news of a carriage being lost in the sands had arrived before us. The good folks were extremely kind, and exceedingly indignant against our guide. They declared that if he had entered the stream fifteen paces higher up, we should have crossed it without any difficulty at all. It would serve him quite right, they said, to lose his carriage and horses, for it was "une mauvaise plaisanterie d'être endormi dans un lieu comme-ça."

We saw nothing more of him, but we heard that he succeeded, by means of long ropes, in getting out the horses, but that the carriage sank into the sand, and was lost.

I may here mention, for the benefit of visiters to Mont St. Michel, what I afterwards found to be the case. The passage to the mount from Pontorson may be made without the least difficulty or danger whatever, either on horseback, in a carriage, or on foot. I passed the sands there subsequently, and found that even the precaution of taking a guide was needless.

For the present, being soaked, and sanded, and tired, we abandoned our visit to Mont St. Michel, and made the best of our way to Pontorson on foot, congratulating ourselves much on the chance, which had saved our

baggage from a wetting at least, if not from a watery, or rather a sandy grave; though the absence of it at the present moment was not, in any other point of view, altogether desirable.

I had hoped to have found at Pontorson some remains of the castle, which was built there originally by William the Conqueror to guard his frontier, and which, in after time, was given by the king of France to Duguesclin. There is a story attached to this castle, in which we find that our friend, Tiphaine-la-Fée, could act the part of a heroine as well as, or, indeed, rather better than that of an astrologer.

It was a dark winter's nigh, in the year 1361, and the lady Tiphaine was alone in the castle of Pontorson with her sister-in-law, the lady Juliana Duguesclin, afterwards abbess of St. George de Rennes, and such of the garrison as her husband had been able to leave behind him. She had been married nearly a year; but, if those hours only, during which she had enjoyed her husband's society were counted, the honeymoon was not yet elapsed. For the times were troublous, and the English rarely allowed the stout knight much time for repose in his castle hall, or dalliance in his lady's bower.

The company, however, of the lady Juliana was a source of great comfort to the solitary bride, and her studious pursuits enabled her to while away the tedious hours of her husband's absence much more agreeably than could the generality of noble ladies of those days, whom the same causes placed in similar circumstances.

The two sisters had, on the evening in question, themselves gone the round of the castle to see all secure, as was their wont, and as became the wife and sister of Bertrand Duguesclin; and had been congratulating themselves on having got rid of some disagreeable guests, certain English prisoners, who had been recently ransomed. The principal of these was one William Felleton, the seneschal of Santonge, between whom and Duguesclin there had been for some time ill-will and mutual defiance. The lady Tiphaine had a peculiar aversion to this gentleman, for it was he who, in the very first days of her marriage, and while the nuptial festival was being celebrated in the castle, made a descent upon the coast near Pontorson with two hundred Englishmen at his back, and came under the very walls, taunting her husband with the change in his pursuits, and inquiring how long he was to be indebted to the charms of

the lady Tiphaine for free license to pillage and plunder the country at his pleasure, with nobody to say him nay.

Besides all this, he had been a troublesome prisoner to keep; for "Messire Bertrand" was too courteous a cavalier to consign to a dungeon a knight, his captive, even though an Englishman, and one he hated; and so, as I said, the ladies congratulated themselves, as they passed by the door of the chamber he had inhabited, that he was gone; and then, having completed their rounds, they retired to the same bed, in an upper chamber of one of the towers of the castle.

They had not long fallen asleep, and the Lady Tiphaine was dreaming, as all married ladies under such circumstances ought, and, I believe, invariably do dream, of their absent lords, when she was suddenly startled from her sleep by the sound of voices, as it appeared to her, just outside her chamber window. Her first impulse was to awaken her sister, and her second to spring from the bed, and ascertain, if possible, by going to the window, from whence the sounds proceeded. The night was so dark, that it was extremely difficult to distinguish any object amid the general gloom. She, however, distinctly heard voices whispering in the darkness beneath

her, and it was the impression of the Lady Juliana, who had joined her at the window, that the persons from whom the sound proceeded could not be at so great a distance from them as the ground; and, sure enough, after gazing earnestly for a few moments into the misty space, both ladies distinctly saw the dark figures of several men ascending a part of the wall, not far from their own window.

Their resolution was taken in an instant. They neither screamed nor fainted, nor even paused to wake their waiting-women, who slept in an adjoining chamber, but both, without speaking, and as by a common impulse turned to a little door communicating with a turret staircase, which led to the top of the tower. Springing up the little narrow stair as quick as thought, and, drawing the ponderous bolt, which secured on the inside the door of the turret, they stood, with their hair and hastily assumed garments fluttering in the night-wind, on the leads of the embattled tower. In those days of witchcraft and supernatural agencies, their appearance might well have been enough to scare the intruders, more especially as they knew that the mistress of the mansion they were attempting to surprise was Tiphaine-la-Fée. On the present occa-

sion, however, that lady had recourse to none but means the most perfectly lawful and natural.

The two heroines lost not an instant in flying to that part of the wall which they had seen the enemy ascending. A minute more, and it would have been too late The foremost of the three men, on a long ladder reared against the wall, was within a few feet of the top. With no tremulous or weakly hands the two ladies seized the top of the ladder, and by a violent exertion succeeded in hurling it and those it bore from the wall.

In another minute the alarum-bell of the castle was sending its too well-known roar far and wide in the stillness of the night over the town, and many a scattered grange and hamlet in the distance. The alarmed garrison rushed to the walls in every part of the castle, and all hope of surprising the lady of Pontorson in her stronghold was abandoned for that time.

It was by no means, however, equally clear that the business of the night was over for those who had made the attempt. They knew that the whole country-side would be up and on the look-out in a few minutes, and that their retreat might be difficult to accomplish ; but they little thought that that alarum

had reached the ears of one whom they deemed far enough away. Could they have guessed that Bertrand Duguesclin was riding that night with two score men of arms at his back on his way home from Nice, where he had been laid up for three months with a broken leg, they assuredly would not have selected that direction for their retreat. Such, however, was the case. Anxious to return to his young wife, the good knight, instead of passing the night at St. Meen, had determined to push on and surprise her by a serenade under her windows from his well-known bugle. He had passed the little town and friendly garrison of Antrain, and was within a league of his own castle door, when he heard the sudden peal of the alarum booming over the woods, which then covered the country in that direction.

It will be doing the good knight no wrong to suppose that the ill-omened sound made him turn pale, and breathe fast as he stuck the spurs into his horse. For, though as stout a heart as ever beat under a steel breast-plate, Bertrand was a fond husband. And,

"Thinking on an absent wife,
Will blanch a faithful cheek."

Duguesclin, therefore, was in no very peace-

able mood, when he encountered the foiled party retreating in haste and disorder from the castle. Though the numbers were considerably larger than that of his followers, yet, unprepared, and in confusion as they were, and in a hostile country, they were easily made prisoners. And then "Messire Bertrand's" anger was not diminished by the discovery that the leader of the band was no other than his late prisoner and old enemy, the much hated Felleton.

"I rejoice, Messire le Seneschal," he said, bitterly, "to find that your quarters in my poor castle of Pontorson were so much to your mind that you have come back to reseek them; and I trust to make your sojourn in them this time longer than your last. I only grieve that you should have chosen to make your visit to Pontorson when I was not there to receive you in person."

The first light of morning was shewing to each other the conquering party and their captives, when they reached Pontorson. Several ladders, and the dead bodies of three men, were lying beneath the castle walls. Duguesclin saw at once, from the nature of the attempt, that it could not have been made with any possible chance of success without the connivance of some one within the castle;

and a little cross-questioning and examination of circumstances elicited the fact, that Felleton and one of his companions, following the sure and beaten path to poor woman's frail heart, had, during their residence as prisoners in the castle, corrupted the fidelity of the two waiting-women of the lady Tiphaine and the lady Juliana.

It is more perhaps to the disgrace of the age to which this tale belongs than to that of Duguesclin individually, that old Argentre, the chronicler, who rela es the story, goes on to tell that these two *women* were tied together in a sack, and thrown into the river. This cruel mode of death, it seems, was especially reserved for women at that period. The first time a woman was hung in France was in the reign of Charles VII.

The lady Tiphaine, at he first sound of her husband's bugle, had run down into the courtyard of the castle, and met him and his twofold train of followers and prisoners under the great gateway. It is recorded that, on recognising Felleton, she could not refrain from saying—"Comment, brave Felleton! vous voilà encore! C'est trop pour un homme de cœur comme vous d'être battu deux fois dans l'intervalle de douze heures, une fois par la femme, une autre par le mari!" Such was

the lady's greeting to the unfortunate Englishman. But my researches among the chronicles of the period have not been able to discover any particular account of the reception she accorded to Messire Bertrand.

These personages lived, and breathed, and loved, and hated, a short four hundred years ago. Tradition still marks the spot where Tiphaine-la-Fée resided, and couples with her name a variety of wonderful tales, which live from age to age in the memory of the peasants. But other vestige of William the Conqueror's castle, and all the generations which successively possessed it, there remains none; and the little town of Pontorson at the present day has nothing of any kind to interest or amuse any one. It had not even, which we thought worse still under the circumstances, a dinner to give us. At least we did not succeed in getting any thing better than some rye-bread, bad butter, and most miserable cider. Being fully determined by this specimen of the hospitalities of Pontorson not to seek our quarters for the night there, if we could avoid it, we hired a char-à-banc to take us to Dol.

It is worthy of note that these little vehicles, rightly called carts with a bench, are, unless in bad weather, far preferable to the

huge cabriolet. In point of dignity, it is true, they are many degrees below the cab; so much so in the owner's esteem, that usually a much lower price is asked for the hire of them. But they are much lighter, get on faster, and, making no pretensions to springs, are much more tolerable in my estimation than the "voitures bien suspendues," whose springs serve only to transmit to your person every jolt in the road, and every motion of the wheel increased to twofold violence.

In one of these unpretending little vehicles, then, drawn by a ragged red pony, we left Pontorson about three o'clock, crossing the bridge over the Couesnon, which gives the town its name, and divides Normandy from Britanny.

It was on this bridge, an important pass in those days, that the celebrated Duc de Richemont, brother of Duke John V. of Britanny, and afterwards Constable of France, had an interview with his brother. He had been prisoner in England ever since the day of Agincourt, in 1415; and it was in 1420 that he came to Pontorson, "sur sa foi, et en la garde du comte de Suffolc," to see his brother. There, according to the account of the old historian, Guillaume Gruel, who was present on the occasion, and whose narrative is

printed in the eighth volume of Petitot's collection, "le Duc Jehan qui estoit fort desirant de veoir ledict Comte de Richemont son frere, le vint voir jusques sur le pont de Pontorson, et estoit le duc bien accompaigné, et avoit deux cent lances de sa garde; et Dieu sçait s'ils s'entrefirent bonne chere, et s'ils pleurerent tous deux bien fort!"

One of the subjects immortalised by Matilda's needle in the Bayeux tapestry, is Harold pulling out some soldiers of Duke William's army, who had fallen among the quicksands of the river Couesnon, on their way to chastise the revolt of Conan, duke of Britanny. So that the dangers of these sands were well known eight hundred years ago.

From Pontorson to Dol it is between ten and eleven miles, which our char-à-banc and pony performed in a couple of hours, landing us at "la grande maison," at Dol, at five P.M.

Having first secured beds, and learned that we should find supper on the table at six o'clock, we hastened to the bureau de diligence, to gain, if we could, some intelligence of our strayed baggage. 'Yes; it had been there, but, as nobody knew any thing about it, it had been sent on to St. Malò.'

"And if nobody knows any thing about it

at St. Malo, I suppose they will send it back again to Avranches."

"C'est bien probable, monsieur."

Pleasant! All that could be done was to give the same orders that one does respecting a stray horse, and desire the man to stop the articles, if he saw them passing that way.

CHAPTER XI.

Frontier of Britanny — Peculiarities of the Breton Race — Their Backwardness in Civilization — Their Character—Dol — Its Cathedral and Bishopric — Bishop of Dol in the Thirteenth Century—Anecdote—Menhir, near Dol—The Town by Moonlight — Marshes recovered from the Sea — Mont Dol — View from the Summit.

The ancient frontier of Normandy and Britanny was the river Couesnon, and Dol, therefore, together with the country we had passed through between it and Pontorson, was the first specimen we had seen of Britanny. But, although the differences in the people, and the general appearance of the country on crossing the frontier, are quite sufficiently remarkable to make it evident to the traveller that he is no longer among the same race, or surrounded by the same manners and habits of life, yet it is not here that he must seek for those striking peculiarities, which make the inhabitants of the lower province objects of so much curiosity and interest.

Ancient Britanny comprised the five mo-

dern departments of "Ille et Vilaine," "Loire Inferieure," "Côtes du Nord," "Morbihan," and "Finistere." The two latter, with the western half of the Côtes du Nord, were called "la basse Bretagne," and it is only within these limits that the Breton language and pure Celtic race are still found. This district only is, as the native antiquarians love to call it, "la Bretagne bretonnante."

The traveller, therefore, must not expect to see at Dol the long floating locks, or to hear the strange uncouth words, of "la vielle Armorique." He is still in France, although in a backward and remote province. It is chiefly by the striking difference in the physiognomy of both sexes, but more especially of the women, that he may perceive that he is among a people sprung from an entirely different stock. Instead of the long oval faces, regular unexpressive features, blue eyes, and bright complexions of Normandy, he will see the brown or freckled skin, sharp black eyes, short round faces, and broad strongly formed jawbones, which, here as in Wales, are the characteristics of the Breton race. There is a perceptible difference, also, in the average stature both in men and women. But in this particular, the peculiarity, I believe, is with the Norman race, who are taller than the inha-

bitants of any other part of France. The blouze, too, of blue cotton, so universal in Normandy, gives place to a sort of coat made of calfskin, or sometimes sheepskin, worn with the hair or wool outside. This garment reaches a little below the knee, and has a cape which barely covers the shoulders. If the comparison between the two people be pushed beyond these external differences, and an observer will carry his investigations into the houses and mode of living, and still farther into the character of the people, a striking difference, and one which may well give rise to much speculation, will be found to exist.

In physical well being, in comfort, and prosperity, the Norman is very far in advance of his backward neighbour — the Celt. He is industrious, active, thrifty, and prudent, and it is, of course, from these causes that his prosperity arises. The difference in the habitations of the labouring classes is striking. A Norman cottage generally enjoys a fair share of the light of heaven; while a great deficiency of windows, that sure sign of a backward and imperfect state of civilization, is almost universal in Britanny. In cleanliness, both as regards his house and person, the Norman peasant, though filthy in

his habits, if compared to our peasantry, is far superior to the Breton. I have, however, been repeatedly assured that a great improvement in this respect has taken place in Brittanny within the last twenty years.

But with all the faults, which result from backwardness in the race of improvement and civilization, the natural character of the Breton has much in it to admire. Honest, frank, loyal, hospitable, and religious, he is in most of these respects favourably contrasted with the Norman. He is idle, it is true, but contented with the small produce of his easy labour. If he be obstinate in pursuing the beaten track, to which he has been accustomed, his motives of action for the most part take their rise in honest principles.

In these points, and all others, the peculiar character of the people will be found more strongly marked, and more fully developed, as we advance into that part of the country, which has come less into collision with the other parts of France.

The little town of Dol was the seat of a bishop before the revolution. How tired one becomes in France of hearing and repeating those ill-omened words — "before the revolution!" It is impossible to travel ten miles without finding traces of something

useful, or good, or agreeable, or beautiful, which *was* "before the revolution." But Dol was even then in a condition sadly fallen from its primitive dignity. Time has been when the metropolitan of Dol wrote himself primate of the kingdom of Britanny. For, in the sixth century, Hoel the great, who found it very inconvenient that his bishops should be under the authority of the foreign archbishop of Tours, got rid of the difficulty by erecting Dol into an archbishopric.

As for the cathedral, however, which is all that remains of the departed glories of Dol, although it may have been useful, it never could have been either agreeable or beautiful, even before the revolution. It is the most gloomy-looking building I ever saw. Dark, heavy, black, and unornamented, it seems to mourn in solitude and silence the days that are gone. The priests talk much of the fine pictures and other trappings, which they say once adorned the now naked walls; but the character of gloom is so strongly impressed upon the building, that the gauds and frippery, always distasteful to an eye accustomed to the simplicity of our churches, would be more than usually inappropriate, and "serve but to flout" the frowning vaults, and sombre aisles.

The bishopric of Dol was one of five which divided between them the northern coast of Britanny. The others were St. Malo, St. Brieuc, Terguier, and St. Pol de Leon. All of them, save the second, shared the fate of Dol. They were of course very small, but Dol was by far the smallest. The old diocese was nearly coextensive with the three cantons of Dol, Chateauneuf, and Pleine-Fougeres, and must have contained about twenty parishes. But the smallness of his dominion did not prevent the bishop of Dol from aspiring to as great temporal power and consequence as his neighbours. In the thirteenth century we find him in league with the bishops of St. Malo, Rennes, Treguier, and St. Brieuc, waging a spiritual war against Duke Peter, whom, from his constant quarrels with the clergy, history has dubbed "Mauclerc." The quarrel was an old one. The clergy insisted on receiving a third part of the property of all who died intestate. They argued the matter thus: Those who die intestate die unprepared, and such a death must be sent by God as a punishment. The punishment proves that there are sins to be expiated; no expiation under the circumstances can be so efficacious as giving up a part of one's property to the church, and, in common charity,

the church cannot but suppose that the deceased had the intention of doing so, if he had had an opportunity.

Nothing could be more logical or more entirely satisfactory, but it frequently happened that the heirs of the intestate person would not hear reason, and then the bishop naturally excommunicated them. All this of necessity led to a state of schism between the temporal and spiritual authorities, neither profitable nor agreeable to either party, and still less to the unfortunate people. Thus Pierre Mauclerc summons an inhabitant of Dol to appear in his court, which the poor man very obediently does. But the bishop, claiming the right of jurisdiction, without appeal, within the walls of his metropolis, forthwith excommunicates him for doing so. The man, cut off by this fearful sentence from all the sympathies, charities, and intercourse, of social life, pines under it and dies. The bishop forbids any priest to bury him, seeing that he had presumed to die without being reconciled to the church. And the duke brings the affair to a conclusion, and gives the bishop tit for tat by interring alive, in the same grave with his excommunicated vassal, the priest, who in obedience to a command he dared not disobey, had refused to bury him.

Quicquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi.

There is no time or weather so delightful as the evening of a hot day. The sun was just hiding the last bit of his red disc behind the heights of Becherel, on the frontier of the Côtes du Nord, when we strolled down the principal street of the cidevant little city with the intention of walking as far as a remarkable monument, which exists rather more than a mile to the north-east of the town. It is one of those mysterious monuments termed "menhirs," from the Breton "men," or "mean," a stone, and "hir," long, whose purport and destination have so much perplexed the learned, and consists of a single stone, which rears its solitary head in the midst of a field of corn to the height of thirty feet. About thirty years ago the ground at the base was opened, and it was found to be fifteen feet in depth beneath the soil, making the entire length of the stone forty-five feet. The circumference at the largest part is about twenty-eight feet. At the same time it was found that, by cubing the mass, the weight must be two hundred and eleven thousand pounds (French).

If it is difficult to determine with what intention this and similar stones were raised, it is at least equally so to conceive the means by which it could have been accomplished. The

enormous mass in question is a species of granite, the nearest rocks of which are found at Mont-Dol, a distance of three or four miles.

It should seem that there could be little to gratify the eye or detain the attention in a rude unfashioned mass. And yet we continued to gaze upon the hoary stone as if it had possessed the power of fascination. I could fancy it anxious but unable to communicate to the successive generations, who regard it with superstitious awe, the facts whose memory it was intended to guard and perpetuate; like some ghost, compelled to await a certain spell before it can speak the secrets, for the sake of revealing which it still haunts the earth. It looked so pale and mournful, too, in the moonlight, standing there alone from century to century, unaltered by the lapse of ages, while all around has changed. Where are the thick forests, with their inhabitants, which covered the face of the country when that stone was raised? Even the eternal Ocean has changed his haunts since then, and retired before the encroachments of civilization.

The characteristics of constant change are so visible in all that surrounds us, that the contemplation of any thing — a mere

stone—which changes not, operates powerfully on the imagination, and inspires a sort of awe and respect, as for something specially privileged and exempted from the common course of nature.

We had a delightful moonlight walk back to Dol. Most of the houses in the principal street, which is, in fact, almost the whole of the town, are built "en colombage," as the French term it; that is, with the upper stories projecting over the ground-floor some twelve or fifteen feet, and supported on pillars. A sort of colonnade is thus formed in front of the houses, under which the children play, and the women sit and spin.

The houses thus constructed, with their huge timber-framed gable-ends, the massive dark-coloured granite pillars, with many of their capitals grotesquely carved, and the colonnades on either side, in contrasted light and shade, had a romantic and picturesque effect in the moonlight, as we walked up the silent and deserted street, whose inhabitants, with few exceptions, had been in bed and asleep an hour ago.

The next morning we left Dol early, intending to walk to Dinan, which is about sixteen or seventeen miles distant. The first part of our road lay through the level, low

grounds, which have been recovered from the sea. These extend from Pontorson to Chateauneuf, near St. Malo. The government some time since granted a charter of incorporation to the proprietors of the recovered lands, by virtue of which they meet once a year at Dol, to levy a rate for the maintenance of the embankments, and to make any regulations for the management of the sluices, etc., which may appear to be for the general interest.

The marshes were for a long time deemed extremely insalubrious, but they have been drained during the last few years to a considerable extent, and they are said to have ceased to be so in any serious degree. The whole of the lands, thus banked in by a sea wall about sixteen miles in extent, are extremely fertile, and grow much corn, as well as tobacco, hemp, and flax. The cider, also, which is produced from these districts, is much esteemed.

The various vegetable remains which are found from time to time in turning up the soil of these marshes, prove that, in taking possession of them, man has only regained a territory which was originally his own, till the encroachment of ocean drove him from it. Whole trees have frequently been found re-

versed as to their position, but sometimes retaining their entire form, their bark, and even their leaves.

At about a league from Dol, the road passes the foot of a somewhat singular elevation called Mont Dol. When the sea flowed over these recovered lands, Mont Dol must have been an island, for it rises to a very considerable height, an isolated rock in the midst of the marshes. It presents, in this respect, a striking analogy to the rock of Mont St. Michel, which is rendered yet more remarkable by the similarity of the tradition, which points out both these mounts as having been spots sacred to the mysterious Druidism, and seats of establishments of priestèsses.

We turned from the road for the sake of the view which we expected to enjoy from the top of the hill, and in mounting I found it, as usual, higher than we had judged it to be from the appearance. But the labour of reaching the summit is amply repaid by the singular view which presents itself to the eye of those who will take the trouble to do so. The other, that is the northern side of the mount, is much more precipitous than that we had ascended, and at the bottom of it is the sea. The whole bay of Mont St. Michel, with its mount in the midst, the

coast of Lower Normandy as far as Granville, the wooded fields of the Avranchin, with Avranches itself rising on its own green hill from among them, may be seen to the right, while the less extensive view to the left is shut in by the far projecting promontory and roadsted of the gastronomically celebrated Cancale.

The inland view is not extensive. Immediately at the foot of the mount are stretched the flat and richly cropped district of the marshes, divided into little fields, each showing a different shade of green according to the nature of the varied crops with which the soil is loaded. In the midst of these is the town of Dol, built on ground but slightly rising above the level of the marshes; but yet sufficiently so to have escaped their fate when the sea made them its prey.

The highest point of the hill is crowned with a little knot of chesnut trees, not far from which there is a telegraph on the line of communication from Paris to Brest.

Descending from Mount Dol, we once more resumed our walk; but we had wasted, or at least expended, a precious hour of the morning freshness, and the sun was hot, and we were tired before we got to Dinan.

CHAPTER XII.

Dinan—Colony of English—Approach to the Town—The Chateau—The Place Duguesclin—Old France's Chivalry and Young France's Poetry—Tomb of Duguesclin—Walls of the Town—The Jerzual—Public Library—The Valley of the Rance—Village of Lehon—Legend of the Priory of St. Magloire—Tombs of the Beaumanoirs—Chateau de Lehon—"Les Eaux"—Delights of "the Season" at Dinan—Walk to La Garaye—Valley of the Argentel.

Dinan is one of those towns which have become colonies of English emigrants. It is very pretty and conveniently situated, and was very cheap; and so a tribe of our wandering countrymen "marked it for their own."

No Egyptian ever dreaded the approach of a swarm of locusts more than the native residents of the little towns of France do the settling down of a flight of English. For the result in both cases is the same—scarcity and dearness of every article of consumption. The tradesmen of course have no objection to us; but the little "rentiers," the "employés" of all sorts, and all that class, so numerous in France, who live modestly and

thriftily upon their means, and can but just make both ends meet, complain ruefully that meat has risen from five or six sous to ten; that bread and wine have increased fifty per cent in price; eggs and butter worse still; and every thing more or less in proportion.

I met, in the remoter parts of Britanny, three or four old Englishmen, many years resident in the country, who constantly retreat before the advancing flood of their countrymen like the squatters, those pioneers of civilization in the western forests of America; well knowing that to live cheaply they must find some part of the country where English gold has not yet penetrated.

At Dinan the English have a place of worship and a resident clergyman. In the summer months a considerable number of visiters also are seen there, some passing on after a day's rest, others remaining weeks or months. And in truth Dinan is not a bad place at which to while away a summer for once and away. Notwithstanding the English, you may live very comfortably at a tolerably good hotel for £3 a month, and the neighbourhood is far from being without attraction.

On approaching the town by the Normandy road, as we did when we walked from Dol, a stranger would suppose himself close to it

within a furlong of the walls, when in fact he has yet a mile or more to travel. Between him and the town, totally concealed by the trees, and the disposition of the ground, flows the Rance, at the bottom of a deep, narrow, and rocky valley. On the other side rises bold and abrupt the eminence on which Dinan is built. The rock is granite, and rises about two hundred and fifty feet above the level of the sea.

Descending the ravine by a steep and rocky path, for the high road makes a long circuit, we found ourselves on the banks of the Rance, in a little fauxbourg, which calls itself the port of Dinan. The river is passed by an old stone bridge, below which is seen a miniature little steam-boat, just arrived from St. Malo, and awaiting tomorrow morning's tide to start again for another trip. From this bridge the road climbs the steep side of the hill by a succession of zig-zags close under the walls of the town. For Dinan is a walled town, and has stood some hard blows in its day, though, in the present state of the art of war, a few guns, or shells from the opposite side of the river, would destroy the little place in a very short time.

The road enters the town close to the remains of the old chateau, a building which

dates from 1300 or thereabouts. One very large tower and another smaller one remain in a state of perfect repair, and serve the purpose of a prison. The building is separated from the town by two deep ditches, the first of which is crossed by an old stone bridge, and the second by a wooden one, which has replaced the ancient drawbridge.

Immediately beyond the château is the "Place Duguesclin," so called from having been the spot on which, in 1359, a duel, much celebrated in the annals of Britanny, took place between that hero and Thomas de Cantorbury, in which the former was victorious. The "champ clos," which was the scene of this battle, has been planted with lindens, and serves as a promenade for the inhabitants of the town. At one end is a statue of Duguesclin, of which the inhabitants are very proud. All this must be "gratifying, of course—naturally so," as Mrs. Nickleby says, to the gallant Bertrand's ghost; but I think that the good knight would hardly approve of the following lines of M. Victor Aubry, a living French poet, which occur in a poem entitled "Dinan."

"Ah! qu'il est doux d'errer sous ces tilleuls si frais,
Où du grand Duguesclin la figure guerrière,
Semble nous dire encore, ici, dans la poussière,
Mon *pied vainqueur foula* l'Anglais."

This kicking of a fallen foe would hardly have seemed so glorious an achievement to the warrior of la vielle France as to the poet of la jeune France.

We took up our quarters at the Hotel du Commerce, in the "Place Duguesclin," and were assigned a chamber at the top of the house, which looked out on the "place," and the lindens, and the beau monde of Dinan promenading under them, and there we determined should be our home for the next three or four days.

The staple curiosities of the little town were soon seen. We visited the spot in the church of St. Sauveur, where the heart of Duguesclin and that of his wife are deposited. They were removed from the chapel of a convent of Jacobins, at Dinan, to their present resting-place on the 9th of July, 1810. A stone, bearing the following inscription in gothic characters, was removed at the same time, and may now be seen at St. Sauveur's.

"Cy gist le cueur de messire bertrand du gueaquī en son vivāt conetiable de frāne qui trespassa le xiii^{e} jour de jullet lan mil iii^{c} iiii^{xx} dont son corps repos avecques ceulx des Roys a sainct denis en France."

Having paid our respects to the memory of this preux chevalier, we next walked round

the walls of the town. These remain in great part entire; and a very delightful promenade has been made upon some parts of them. On the south side of the town a variety of gardens, summer-houses, and parts of habitations have been built on the wall, which have a quaint and picturesque appearance, and which, mingling a variety of harmonising tints with the fine grey of the old battlements, might, together with the towers of the castle in the back-ground, make the subject of a very pretty picture.

The interior of the town has several picturesque specimens of the domestic architecture of the middle ages. Many of the houses are built in the same manner as those I remarked at Dol, which imparts to the narrow streets of a fortified town a dark and confined appearance, and must, in fact, tend to impede a free circulation of fresh air.

A narrow street, inhabited by the lower classes only, and called the Jerzual, is worth visiting, from its very singular appearance. It leads from the upper part of the town down to the bridge over the Rance before spoken of; but, instead of being cut in zig-zags like the high road, which, by another route, connects the same two points, it descends the hill in a direct line. It is so exceedingly

steep that it must be quite out of the question for horses or carts; and a pedestrian has need of a sure foot and much caution if he would not bring away with him more reminiscences of the Jerzual than would be agreeable. The execrable pavement, too, makes the matter worse. But, notwithstanding all these weighty arguments on the con side of the question, it is worth while to walk through the Jerzual for once and away. The strange construction of the old houses, which seem threatening every minute to come tumbling over the heads of their neighbours below them, with their enormous timbers and beetling roofs, the queer peeps the upturned eye catches here and there of bits of the town far above, and the mysterious obscurity of the abyss below, all combine to impress upon the Jerzual a character peculiar to itself. It was in this abode of dirt and darkness that I saw pasted on a wall a placard, setting forth at great length the extraordinary abilities and success of some itinerant quack, and summing up the whole by assuring the people that he was able "executer la medicine aussi bien avec ses pieds que le premier medecin du monde avec ses mains."

Having at length emerged from the Jerzual safe and sound in wind and limb, we paid a visit to the public library, a modern establish-

ment, founded in 1832, but which already contains many curious documents relating to the town and its arrondissement. Among others of less general interest we saw a very curious MS. containing the names, arms, and devices of the knights of the round table, together with descriptions of their characters and personal appearance. The arms, the initial letters, &c., are coloured and gilt.

We spent the whole day in wandering in and about the town; and in the cool of the evening sallied forth from its gates to take a walk in the valley of the Rance.

This river, which takes its rise among the hills of the highest part of the Méné range, near the little town of Collinée, flows thence in an eastern direction, till at St. Jouan it very nearly reaches the boundary line of the department. There, turning to the north, it flows through a wide and fertile valley, bounded on the left by the Méné hills, and on the right by the range which forms the frontier of the Côtes du Nord and the Ille et Vilaine, till it meets, near Evran, the "Canal d' Ille et Rance." It is not, however, yet navigable, unassisted by art. The canal, therefore, accompanies it, making use of its waters, and here and there of its bed, till a little above Dinan. The valley there becomes extremely

narrow, in fact, a mere rocky gorge, and the river, freed for a while from the restraints of docks and sluices, flows at the bottom of its deep valley in a graceful semicircle around the walls of Dinan; then passing under the four arches of the old bridge, three of which are of stone, and the other of wood, it follows a tolerably straight northward course, and falls into the sea at St. Malo. The most picturesque part of its whole course, is that in the immediate neighbourhood of Dinan. Shut in between rocky hills of precipitous steepness and considerable height, it presents a succession of varied and romantic scenery, which might occupy the pencil of a sketcher for many a day.

Leaving the town, we descended into the valley by a rocky little path on the opposite side of the hill to that on which the high road is cut. This brought us to the river at the exquisitely pretty little village of Lehon. Here are combined in the utmost profusion all the elements of the picturesque; rocks, woods, water, hills, ruined buildings, and ivy-grown walls. Of course I do not mean to compare this little Breton village with the sublimities of Alpine scenery, or the glowing glories of an Italian landscape. All the features of the scene are here upon a small scale,

it must be admitted; but all is in proportion, and truly of its kind I do not know so pretty a spot as the little village of Lehon.

A tiny nameless streamlet falls into the Rance at this point; and the little knot of houses clustering around their church is niched into the corner of the valley formed by the junction. At the entrance of the village are the ruins of the convent founded in the year 850 by Nomenoe, the thirteenth king of Britanny, under the style and title of the Priory of St. Magloire de Lehon.

Now the foundation of these very picturesque ruins, and the origin of their name, was in this wise.

King Nomenoe, being at the time rather in arrears with his conscience, and, consequently, inclined for some pious achievement, chanced one day to pass by this spot, where he found six poor monks living on the banks of the Rance in great poverty and austerity, according to the rule of St. Benoit.

This was a fine opportunity for paying off some of his long score with Heaven. But, as a convent is nothing without a name, his majesty demanded what holy relics they possessed, that he might dedicate his foundation accordingly. To which inquiry the poor Benedictines replied—and very slow monks they

must have been to do so — that they were ashamed to say that they had not so much as a rag or a bone of any saint in Christendom.

The good king was much scandalized at finding men thus living in total destitution of the commonest necessaries of religion. But, still unwilling to abandon entirely his gracious intentions towards them, he promised that he would build them a monastery, and endow it competently as soon as ever they could succeed in obtaining some body in good reputation and preservation to be put in the church, and to accept the dedication thereof: "s'ils pouvaient," says the ecclesiastical historian, "se procurer quelque corps saint pour mettre dans leur eglise et en devenir le patron."

It was quite out of the question to lose so good a thing for want of a body; so the six monks set their wits to work in earnest to think how they could get one. But bodies of any tolerable character were scarce at that period. The ecclesiastics in those days were, as is well known, most determined body-snatchers, and if a man had led any thing like a decent life, he had not a chance of resting in his grave. Live saints were more abundant, and not so much sought after, so that they thought at first that their best

chance was to find one, and persuade him to "be a body" expressly for the purpose.

This course was about to be decided on, when brother Condan, one of the six bodiless monks, started up, and said that he recollected having seen in a church in Jersey the body of St. Magloire, which he thought he could succeed in carrying off during the night, without saying any thing to any body, and be off safe out of the island again, before the priests came to the church in the morning, and found their body gone, and nobody there.

This suggestion was received with grateful applause by his brethren, and it was decided that brother Condan should start that same day on his somewhat hazardous errand. It is unnecessary to follow him in his journey. Suffice it, that he reached his destination in safety, and was hospitably received by the priests, whose body he proposed to steal.

In the dead of the night, when every body was gone to bed, he crept into the church; and there for the first time the bold friar faltered for an instant in the execution of his enterprize. For the moon was pouring a flood of pale unearthly light into the church, and every object on which the wan beams rested seemed changed from its usual appearance, and endued with strange forms and

mysterious meaning. He glided swiftly, however, up that side of the aisle which lay in the shade, hastily sprung up the steps of the altar, and, having ascertained by a hurried glance around, that there was no body there —except the one he wanted—snatched the remains of poor St. Magloire from the coffer, where they had rested two hundred and seventy-five years, secured them in a sack, which he had brought with him for the purpose, flung them over his shoulder, and hastened from the church without once looking behind him.

It is a wicked world we live in, and, as far as concerns all the world has to give, roguery has sometimes, to tell the truth, a marvellously strong appearance of being the best policy.

Brother Condan got safe off with his treacherously obtained prize, and returned in triumph with it to the expectant little community on the bank of the Rance. King Nomenoe was graciously pleased to express his entire approbation of the exploit, and immediately set about redeeming his royal promise, by the foundation and endowment of the priory of St. Magloire *de Lehon*.

It was in the ninth century that these deeds were done; but it is in the nineteenth that

a French ecclesiastic, the Abbé Manet of St. Malo, in a work on the history of Britanny, terms this treacherous monk's rascally theft "une pieuse fraude."

The picturesque ruins, which now remain, and serve but to adorn the scene of their former wealth and power, are not those of King Nomenoe's edifice, but belong to a much later period. In this church were buried many of the noble Breton family of Beaumanoir; from which circumstance it is generally known in the country as the "Chapelle des Beaumanoirs." Several of their tombs having been removed from their original places in the church, at the time of the destruction of the monastery, are still to be seen in a building near the western end of the church, which was the sacristy. They point out especially that of Robert de Beaumanoir, the victor in the celebrated "Combat de Trente," of which all the Breton historians are so proud.

About fifty paces from the river, and separated from the hill on which Dinan stands, by a little valley branching off from that of the Rance, is the chateau de Lehon on an isolated eminence. Very little is known of the history of this castle, and very little of its ruins remain. The bases of very thick external walls and of seven towers may yet be seen,

and add another feature to the picturesque beauty of the spot.

History mentions the taking and burning of this chateau by Henry II. of England in 1161. The period of its final destruction was probably the close of the wars of the League. It was certainly standing in 1304.

When we returned to Dinan we found the beau monde still walking under the Lindens in the Place Duguesclin, though it was late. But the evening was delicious, and, though tired, we could not resist the temptation of joining the strollers for half an hour before going to bed.

Our next day was entirely given up to rambling about in the pretty environs of the town. We found our way to a romantic little valley, in which rises a small spring, possessing some medicinal properties. An analysis of them showed a residue of thirteen grains of sediment from seven "chopines" of the water. These thirteen grains were composed of

	grains.
Sea Salt	2
Selinite	1
Calcareous Earth . .	5
Iron	2½
Loss	2½

They are said to smell strongly of rotten eggs, and to be exceedingly good for the

liver. Of this last fact I have not the slightest doubt, seeing that they are situated at a quarter of a league from the town, at the bottom of a steep valley, inaccessible by a carriage.

A little account of these waters, printed at Dinan, sets forth that " Lord Grenville, oncle du fameux Pitt, Julia Sheridan, auteur du Comic Annuel, et niece du ministre Sheridan, M. James, auteur de Masterton, de Desultory-man de Darnley et de plusieurs autres romans, enfin Lord Tyndal grand juge d'Angleterre, et M. Hawes, president de la societé, qui fait construire le tunnel sous la Tamise," together with the two prettiest women in France, whose names the author will not mention, for fear some others might think themselves entitled to that rank, (which is not altogether impossible) have all been benefited by them.

When we rambled into the little valley, it was as quiet, and its solitude as unbroken, as if its waters were sweet and inodorous of rotten eggs. An ugly barn-like building, calling itself the " salle de bal," and a formally planted allée, disfigured the otherwise picturesque features of the spot; but, with the exception of these characteristic marks, there were not the slightest symptoms of all

the revelry and gaiety, which I was told would be found there a month later. Morning promenades and pic-nics, with sketching parties, and exploring parties, among the variety of well wooded little valleys, which branch off in all directions, and offer every facility for losing one'sself, and evening dances, and delightful walks home to Dinan after them by moonlight—these are the attractions which draw to this happy valley every "season," from an hundred to an hundred and fifty visiters. All these varied pleasures too, it should seem, are to be enjoyed at a sufficiently cheap rate; seeing that M. Habasque, in his "Notions sur le littoral des Côtes du Nord," calculates that these one hundred and fifty pleasure-hunters leave annually behind them about twenty thousand francs, giving an average of little more than five pounds a piece.

It may be useful, perhaps, to state here for what maladies the waters are chiefly serviceable. Many doctors have drawn up sufficiently complete catalogues of these; but Jouy, in the "Hermite de la Chausséе'd Antin," gives an account of their marvellous effects, which I prefer extracting, because I feel convinced that he is an authority who may be depended upon. "Les eaux," he says, "entre

autres vertus singulières, ont celle de réparer du temps l'irréparable outrage. Je citerais plusieurs femmes qui ont retrouvé là leur jeunesse, si je pouvais les faire convenir même d' une vieillesse passée."

Rambling on along the banks of the stream, which runs through the little valley, we soon got beyond the region of cut walks and planted allées which surrounds the spot, where the medical Naiad has her inodorous home. Here three valleys, each with its stream, branch off, all so pretty and inviting, that we could hardly decide which to follow. High on the top of the hill which forms one of these valleys, we observed a large house, which a miller's boy told us belonged to "des milords Anglais;" a sort of depôt, I suppose, of the house of peers. We found afterwards that it belonged to an English gentleman of the name of Surtees.

We continued to stroll on without any more definite object than that of enjoying the profound tranquillity and pretty scenery of the narrow tortuous valleys and wooded hills, which compose this sylvan scene, till we came to the ruins of a large mansion, apparently of the seventeenth century. There are some remains of the ornamented front, and traces of large corridors and handsome staircases;

but neither in themselves nor by their position in the landscape could these ruins be a source of much interest to a stranger.

There are reminiscences, however, attached to them which are worth recording, and which make them justly the pride and delight of the good people of Dinan. It was here that for forty years, from 1715 to 1755, the comte and comtesse de la Garaye devoted their lives, their fortune, and their mansion, to the unwearied practice of the most active and enlightened benevolence.

Dissatisfied and weary of leading the life of a man of pleasure, M. de la Garaye, fortunately finding corresponding dispositions in his wife, determined to live henceforth solely for the purpose of alleviating human misery. In order to do this the more effectually, he went to Paris, and there acquired a considerable knowledge of medicine, while his wife actually became one of the first oculists of her day. Thus prepared and qualified, they returned to their chateau of La Garaye, which they converted into a perfect and most admirably administered hospital. Fresh buildings were constructed, medical men were employed, and the work of benevolence carried on upon so extensive a scale, that it is recorded that twenty-eight pupils were at one

time attending the hospital as a medical school. So widely celebrated did the fame of these good deeds become, that Louis XVI. sent M. de la Garaye seventy-five thousand francs to aid him in his various enterprizes for the good of his fellow-creatures.

This good man died at the age of eighty-one, in the year 1755, and his well-matched spouse survived him only two years. They were buried among the graves of those whose latest sufferings they had alleviated in the churchyard of the parish of Taden, in which La Garaye is situated. A white marble monument pointed out the spot to the reverence of every friend of humanity, till the worshippers of reason destroyed it at the period of the revolution.

The chateau of La Garaye can be but a short distance from the town ; but we preferred, instead of returning by the direct route, to retrace our steps until we regained the banks of the Argentel — the pretty name of the little stream which runs through the valley—and follow it to the spot where it discharges its waters into the Rance, a little below Dinan.

The valley continues to be almost as narrow as it is at "les Eaus," till it opens into that of the Rance. One or two water-mills have

found room enough to squeeze themselves in between the stream and the hill-side; and here and there a tiny bright green field occupies the nooks which have been formed now on one side and now on the other, according to the sinuosities of the current, from the alluvial matter deposited by the rivulet. Sometimes a pert and gaily prankt islet, the creation of the stream, encroachingly occupies nearly the entire space between the mountains, while the divided waters of its parent river find an obscure and straitened path under the hills on either side of the increasing bulk of their own offspring.

It was a soothing tranquil scene, which might well have tempted a poet to play the melancholy Jaques, and "moralize this spectacle" into a thousand similes."

Had he yielded, however, to the temptation, the poet would have been, under the circumstances, too late for dinner at my host's "table," which I, not being a poet, and having been walking since an early breakfast, had no desire to be.

So, quitting the shady valley of the Argentel, and, changing the lazy stroll, I had been indulging in, for a good walk, I made the best of my way along the quay, which follows the course of the river for some

distance below the town, and, then once more climbing the hill, found myself in the "salle à manger" of the Hotel de Commerce, just as the benapkined host was in the act of dispensing his "potage aux choux."

CHAPTER XIII.

Trip to St Malo — Tourists in search of the Spirituous — Voyage on the Rance — St. Malo — Walk on the Walls — La Conchée — Cesambre — Chateaubriand's Tomb — Trade of St. Malo – Origin of the town — Return to Dinan.

We had determined that the morrow should be appropriated to a trip to St. Malo. So after dinner we descended the hill yet once again to inquire of the steam-boat at what time it would start in the morning. Had we bethought us of the possibility of acquiring this information from any other source than the boat itself, we might have saved ourselves the trouble; for there is a "bureau de bateau à vapeur" in the town. This, however, we never thought of; so down we went to the bridge, where we found the steamer, who said that she should start at five the next morning punctually.

At five the next morning, therefore, we walked down to the river, together with a party of Englishmen, who had apparently come to Dinan for no other purpose but to

dine and sleep there; for they had arrived from St. Malo by the boat yesterday, just in time for dinner. The whole of the beautiful evening, after dinner till bed-time, they religiously devoted to unintermitted brandy and water. And now they were about to be taken back to the place from whence they came, with the satisfactory consciousness that they had "seen Dinan."

That some men should have no taste for beautiful scenery is intelligible. And it must be admitted that, on the other hand, a decided taste for brandy and water is not unexampled. But why men should leave one tavern, and journey twelve miles to go and booze in another, is rather inconceivable; unless, indeed, it proceeds from a vain hope of deceiving themselves into the notion that they have some other object and enjoyment in life besides the consumption of "warm with," or "cold without." It certainly was not to enjoy the voyage that they had come to Dinan, for they passed it asleep in the cabin.

The little plaything of a boat was getting up her steam, and hissing with a small treble voice as fiercely as her betters, when we reached the quay. Her little deck soon became absolutely crowded with passengers, and within about half an hour after the

time named, she left her moorings amid a volley, from those on shore, of last words and messages and commissions, some in French, some in English, and some in a dialect composed of both.

It is a charming little voyage from Dinan to St. Malo; not so long as to become wearisome, and, for a great part of the distance, on a stream so narrow, that every object on both sides of the river is perfectly within ken. I will not attempt, however, to describe in detail that which has been so admirably painted by Mr. James. The account of Henry Masterton's voyage from St. Malo to Dinan gives a picture of the scene as faithful as it is poetical.

We reached St. Malo early enough to snatch a short look at the town before breakfast, which, short as it was, sufficed to make it manifest to me, that St. Malo is the dirtiest place I ever saw. The morning air, though coming fresh from the open sea, was polluted ere it reached our nostrils. The narrow and confined streets reeked with filthy exhalations; and in no direction could the eye or nose escape from offensive sights and villanous smells. I really think that all the various impurities that combine to infect the air within the high and close walls of the town, would

generate a pestilence, were it not that its situation fortunately exposes it to a salutary sweeping, now and then, from the violent blasts that pass it in their way up the Channel.

We afterwards walked round the town upon the walls, which would really form a glorious terrace, and be a source of great enjoyment and health to the inhabitants, were it not that all the pleasure derivable from the use of it is destroyed by the same constantly recurring causes of disgust.

The walls, which were built by Vauban, are very high, and in an excellent state of repair; and the sea view from them is varied by a multitude of islets and rocks, many of them bearing forts, which defend the roadstead and the town. Among these, the most remarkable are the isles of la Conchée and Cesambre—both of them about two leagues out at sea. The fortifications of la Conchée are one of the most celebrated productions of Vauban's genius. The citadel crowns the summit of a rock, which nature, unaided, has made nearly inaccessible. The fort was long deemed impregnable; but the English managed to take it when they bombarded St. Malo in 1693.

The little isle of Cesambre is worth visiting for the sake of the ruins still to be seen there of

the church belonging to a convent, which once existed in this remote spot. The present fortifications were raised from materials furnished by the destruction of the old abbey.

There is another of these isolated rocks, which has lately become an object of much interest to the Malouins.

To the south-west of the town there is a small isle, whose rock is strewed with sufficient soil to admit of a slight covering of verdure, and on which there are some remains of dilapidated fortifications. It is called le Grand-Bey. Like its fellow, Cesambre, it was formerly inhabited by a religious community; and to the present day the Malouins are in the habit of going thither in pilgrimage on Easter Sunday.

It is on this lonely spot that the author of "The Martyrs" has requested to be buried. In a letter written in 1828 he says. "Il y a long-temps que j'ai le projet de demander à la ville de me concéder a la pointe occidentale du Grand Bey, la plus avancée vers la pleine mer, un petit coin de terre tout juste suffisant pour contenir mon cercueil. Je le ferai bénir et entourer d'une grille. Là, quand il plaira à Dieu, je repóserai sous la protection de mes concitoyens."

Chateaubriand was born at St. Malo in the

Rue de Juifs, in the year 1768. The Malouins of course were delighted with the flattering request, and the mayor, in the name of the town council, wrote a letter in answer, which concludes thus : " Ce lieu de repos que vous desirez au bord de la mer, à quelques pas de votre berceau, sera preparé par la pieté filiale des Malouins dont M. le ministre de la guerre a bien voulu accueillir la prière avec une grâce et un empressement digne de son objet. Une pensée triste se mêle à ce soin. Ah ! puisse le monument rester longtemps vide! Mais l'honneur et la gloire survivent à tout ce qui passe sur la terre."

The good folks of St. Malo were as good as their word ; and forthwith set about preparing a handsome mausoleum, which is now seen on the little isle of the poet's choice.

St. Malo has still a considerable commerce with the East Indies, and North and South America. She sends out also a large number of vessels to the cod-fishery at Newfoundland. But the trade is not so large as it once was ; and is, I believe, still running away to Havre de Grace.

The English reside almost entirely at St. Servan, which occupies the site of the ancient Roman city Aleth, on the opposite side of a large arm of the sea. This is dry at low

water, and at high water is crossed by a multitude of little boats which perform the passage in five or six minutes. We walked across at low water, and had from the other side a fine view of the city and its fortifications, and returned by the long strip of land called the "Sillon," along which a good road runs, and which is the only communication St. Malo has with the continent at the time of high water. In fact the town is built on a rock called the isle d'Aron, which would be in reality an island at high water, were it not protected by banks and piles.

Many a tale might be told of all the martial doings of which St. Malo has been the subject or the scene, from the time when a tribe of half-barbarian Celts were driven by Norman freebooters, still less civilised, to take refuge on the barren rocks, where the city now stands, down to the descent of the English in 1758. More especially there are some interesting legends of the time when, during the disorders of the League, the Malouins surprised and got possession of the chateau, murdered the governor, and actually for some time governed themselves as an independent state. But all these matters would lead us too far afield, and detain us too long just at present.

We had intended to have made a longer stay at St. Malo, if we had been tempted to do so. But when we heard the time of the little steamer's departure, on her return to Dinan, announced by her sputtering as she lay under the walls in the basin between St. Servan and St. Malo, now again filled with water, we yielded to the temptation to leave the nastiest of all nasty places, and made up our minds to bid a somewhat premature adieu to St. Malo just in time to go on board before she threw off her moorings.

Our return voyage was made in the afternoon heat instead of the morning freshness; but the beauty of the banks of the Rance, though seen for the second time, beguiled the way pleasantly, till we once again found ourselves alongside of the little quay at Dinan.

CHAPTER XIV.

Excursion from Dinan—Corseul—Derivation of the Name—Roman Antiquities—Plancoet, the Unfailing Town—A Town Council—Incompatibilities—The River Arquenon—An "Esprit fort"—Quicksands—Castle of Guildo—Passage of Peasant Girls over the Sands—Superstitions—Return to Plancoet—Antiquarian Mail-driver—Visit to Montafilant—Return to Dinan.

There was yet another excursion I wished to make from Dinan before I left it; and, as my companion was desirous of making drawings of some of the old houses in the town, we agreed that he should devote a day to his pencil, while I was left to follow my own devices on the morrow.

At four in the morning then I left Dinan in the mail, which runs between that town and Plancoet, a little "chef lieu de canton" about five leagues to the north-west of Dinan. This mail consists of a cabriolet, an old man, and a good little horse, which perform the distance by dint of great exertion in four hours, arriving at Corseul, which is half-way, at six in the morning.

This suited me well, for Corseul was the first place on my "route" for the day. It is a miserable little village, situated on a knoll, and consisting of about thirty or forty houses. But the very considerable and extensive remains of Roman buildings and foundations, which have been from time to time discovered here, leave no doubt that on this spot once stood a large and flourishing city.

Among the vast quantity of discussion and difference of opinion to which these remains have given rise from 1709, when they were surveyed and reported upon by an engineer sent by government, to the present day, it seems to be clear that this city was that Curiosolitum, of which Cæsar says in his commentaries, that it was one of the first cities of Armorica. Some antiquarians content themselves with deriving the name "Corseul" from the latin Curiosolitum, while others endeavour to find a derivation for it among the radicals of the Celtic language. Cur-sul, they say, would mean, "The wood of the god of war." Now we know that, when the Romans overran the territory of the tribe who possessed this part of the ancient Armorica, one of their towns was called by them "Fanum Martis," which would be an accurate translation of the Celtic Cur-sul.

For what the "Fanum" or shrine was to the polished Roman, his native forest was to the more poetically-minded Celt, who "thought God too great to be confined within the walls of a temple."

In that case "Curiosolitum" and "Fanum Martis" would be one and the same place, the former being an adaptation, and the latter a translation of the old Celtic name.

The quantity of ancient constructions discovered here has been so large that at the beginning of the last century they were used as quarries, from whence materials were drawn for the repairs of the fortifications of St. Malo. The parish church too of Corseul was built of stones obtained from the same source. Demolition on so large a scale has of course made sad work with these venerable traces of the mighty people, who have left the impress of their arts and arms on so large a portion of the world. Little beyond the foundation of walls, which are found in all directions by moving the soil, is now to be seen at Corseul, with the exception of the ruins of a temple, which still remain at the distance of about a quarter of a league from the village.

These consist of four walls remaining out of eight, which formed an octangular enclosure. Each of these has ten feet of length,

and about thirty of height, all standing unsupported. The whole is almost entirely covered with thick ivy, which, nevertheless, leaves a sufficient specimen of the masonry unconcealed, to convince those who see it that it was the work of Roman builders.

A very large quantity of objects of various kinds, chiefly in bronze, have been found at various times among the substructions at Corseul—pateras, rings, spoons, small figures, vases, together with a large quantity of coins, of dates ranging through a very long series of years. A considerable collection of these various objects may be seen in the public museum at Rennes.

As soon as I had satisfied my curiosity by examining the few remains which avarice and ignorance have left, and had convinced myself of the great extent of ground which the city must have covered in the days of its high and palmy state, I pursued my way to Plancoet. This little town is built on the side of a hill, at the foot of which runs the Arquenon, which, with the assistance of the tide, brings vessels of seventy tons to the port. The inhabitants of Plancoet have the reputation of being extremely clever traders and strictly honest men, contradictory as that may appear to some persons. In proof whereof

it is said that, though the annual commercial transactions of the town amount to three hundred thousand francs, there has not been known a bankruptcy there within the memory of man.

Plancoet was the end of my friend the mail-cart-man's journey; and it was my intention to walk to the ruins of the Chateau de Guildo, and return to Plancoet, if possible, in time to accompany him back to Dinan. I communicated my plans to the old man, asking him whether there would be time enough for me to manage it. It seemed rather a doubtful point; for he started on his return to Dinan at one, and it was now eight.

"Mais c'est vrai," said the old fellow, pondering on the state of the case, "il faut absolument que sous visitez le château de Guildo; c'etait parce qu'il aimait trop vous autres Anglais, que son seigneur, le malheureux prince Gilles, avait perdu sa vie."

When we descended from the mail-cart at the door of the little auberge in Plancoet, the first care of the old postman was to call a small council of the inhabitants, to consider what was best to be done in my affair. There was the postmaster, and the landlady of the auberge, and the master of a druggist's shop, which was next door to it. The mail-driver

laid the case before them, and it was agreed nem. con. that I certainly must see Guildo. But, if I followed the bank of the river, it was a long way ; and the short path was not easy to find. This difficulty was, however, met at once by the postmaster, who said that the letter-carrier to St. Jacut de la Mer was going to start directly, and that it would not be much out of his way to walk with me to Guildo.

I ventured here to suggest with diffidence to the assembly that I had left Dinan at four o'clock that morning, and had not yet broken my fast; which I acknowledged a strong desire to do before I proceeded any farther. The landlady perfectly coincided in my view of the case, observing that monsieur would walk twice as well after a good breakfast. The druggist suggested that it could not make much difference to the good people of St. Jacut whether they got their letters an hour sooner or later ; and it was determined on his motion that the letter-carrier should wait till I had eaten my breakfast, which the landlady undertook to prepare in the shortest possible time. The mail-driver, on his part, promised to wait for me till two o'clock, in case I could not get back sooner.

The debate having been brought to this sa-

tisfactory conclusion (a consummation which was not accomplished without intense and unintermitting jabbering on the part of every one of the assembly except myself, who stood silent in the midst, till they had settled the affair), the council separated; the little boys, who had been standing around, looking on with curious observant faces, and some of whom had once or twice essayed to put in a word of advice on the subject under consideration, slowly dispersed; and I proceeded to make the best use of the delay accorded me for the purpose of breakfasting.

This was not accomplished in so short a time as I had intended; for my hostess, incapable of conceiving that any one could be guilty of so monstrous an absurdity as taking eggs and coffee together, which, with bread and butter, formed the breakfast I had ordered—brought me my eggs first, with a vast "caraffe" of sour cider to wash them down, while she occupied herself the while in preparing a "petite tasse de café noir" to drink after it.

If you ask for bread and butter only, you may have coffee with it; but it is with the greatest difficulty that you can persuade a French aubergiste to give you coffee at the same time with eggs or meat.

I attempted the cider, but it set my teeth on edge. Verjuice would have been a mild and balmy beverage compared to it. So I was obliged to remodel my hostess's programme of breakfast; and had to wait till a good bowl of hot café au lait was placed before me.

It was about nine when the letter-carrier, who had stood by with the most resigned and imperturbable patience while these operations were going on, and I set out on our walk to Guildo. The first part of our progress left the river, whose course is winding, a good deal to the left, and I caught only here and there an occasional glimpse of it from the top of some of the little hills with which the whole of this district is undulated. The valley is wide, gently sloping, and pretty well cultivated. Here and there some attempts at irrigation have been made; and the superior greenness of the little patches of water-meadows, as seen among the other crops from a distance, shewed with what good effect.

After nearly an hour's walking, we reached the village of Crehen, on the other side of which the character of the river and of its banks changes. Near this village my guide pointed out to me a tumulus, evidently the work of man. He said that "les paysans"

told a great many strange tales about it; that human bones had been found by digging in it; and that, in stormy nights, a female figure, dressed in white, came forth from it, and went down to the river to wash her clothes, making the whole valley resound with the strokes of her beater upon the linen. He told me all this with a sneer of supreme contempt for the good rustics who believed these old-world tales; for my friend, the letter-carrier, had served in the army, and seen the world, even to the extent of having been quartered in Paris for three months. So he had returned to his native village an educated man, and an "esprit fort," far too wise to "believe any thing of which he did not know the why and the how." Thus, with the same self-sufficient *educated* ignorance, which, in minds too suddenly emancipated from the trammels of long-reverenced ideas, produces similar results in more important matters, he had rejected the truth together with the fable. For true enough it is, as I afterwards ascertained, that bones to a considerable amount had been found in thê tumulus in question, which, in all probability, had been a Celtic place of sepulture.

After leaving Crehen, our walk followed more closely the course of the Arquenon.

The banks are here much higher, and, instead of flowing in a broad and shallow stream in the midst of a wide valley, the river, narrower, deeper, and more rapid, runs with a silent, dark-looking current, at the bottom of a deep gorge. The sides of this ravine are neither turfed nor wooded, but composed of mingled grey crags and patches of light-coloured barren-looking soil, partially covered with furze, and an abundance of some yellow wild flower. It was low water when I walked along the edge of this uninviting ravine; and below that part of the bank which I have described, a large expanse of black rock, alternating with large patches of slimy mud, had been laid bare by the retiring tide, and added to the dreary and desolate ugliness of the scene.

Before reaching Guildo, however, the character of the river is again changed. As it nears the sea, the banks fall, and the space between them is widened to an estuary of very considerable extent, which must have an appearance of some grandeur when the water is in. When the tide is out, however, the estuary of the Arquenon presents a dreary prospect of wide-stretching sands, which impress the more strongly a dismal character on the scene from the melancholy tales which

are current respecting the dangers of their passage, from shifting quicksands concealed among them.

On a rocky promontory, which rises boldly from the edge of these sands, and looks out over the whole of their watery waste, stand the ruins of the castle of which I was in search. They consist of little more than a mere skeleton of walls, flanked by the remains of four round towers, and enclosing an area about sixty-five yards by sixty. The vast chimney of the kitchen, and some remains of round staircases constructed in the thickness of the walls, are the only traces I could find of the interior disposition of the building.

M. de Freminville thinks that the 14th century was the period of its foundation. It was enlarged and repaired by the Duchess Anne of Britanny, and its means of defence were adapted to the more advanced state of the art of war at that period. It is easy to distinguish the remains of the original construction from the smaller specimens of the building of a later period which are scattered among them. The mortar of the old walls is remarkably loose and coarse. The lime seems to have been but sparingly mixed with the ample supplies of sand and shells, furnished on the spot by the broad bed of

the Arquenon. In examining some of the brittle cement thus formed, I observed in it entire shells, some as large as a couple of inches in circumference, which shows that the builders did not think it necessary even to sift or prepare in any way the materials which the tide brought to their hands.

As I stood upon a fragment of the wall, at a spot where time had made "an envious rent," which enabled me to look out from it on the dreary expanse of the sands below, I descried a couple of female peasants coming down to the opposite bank of the estuary, and preparing to pass. With the recollection, fresh in my mind, of the various catastrophes which my friend, the letter-carrier, had been relating to me as having occurred to persons attempting to cross these sands, I watched the progress of the two women with some interest. Two men, who live on the bank, as guides to the passage, accompanied them across the sand to the brink of the river, which still flowed with diminished stream in the midst of them. Here each of the guides stooped his shoulders, and each of the errant damosels, lightly springing upon his back, threw her arms round his neck, and clasping his loins tightly, with her somewhat primitively disclosed lower members, thus boldly

entered the stream. The passage was, upon this occasion, made without accident or difficulty. The ladies and their stout supporters gradually neared the bank, and, at length, safely landed, not far from the spot immediately beneath that part of the walls from which I, unobserved, was looking on upon the proceedings of the party. Each girl sprang to the ground with as little difficulty or ceremony as she had exhibited in mounting; and their faithful knights of the ford neither asked nor received any other or more chivalrous guerdon than one sou each, silently tendered and silently received.

It is observable that, wherever it happens, that the general character and features of any place are of a nature to strike the imagination forcibly, that spot is sure to be selected by the popular creed as the scene of supernatural agencies and awe-inspiring histories. It is a great mistake to suppose that the vulgar are insensible to the varieties of nature's moods, or unaffected by the different associations of ideas which they are calculated to produce. Nor are they, when unbrutalized by vice, to say the least, more destitute than their educated superiors of that poetry of nature which loves to people each solitary h ll or gloomy dell with such crea-

tures of the imagination as are most in accordance with the character of the spot.

It might be a curious and not uninteresting speculation to inquire from what circumstances of the constitution of men, or whether, rather, from those of their own condition in life, it arises that the imaginative creations of the vulgar are almost invariably of a melancholy and dread-inspiring cast. But so tempting a field of observation and inquiry would, at present, lead us much too far away from the banks of the Arquenon and the old castle, whose mouldering ruins enhance the desolation of the scene that surrounds them.

The untaught imaginations of the scattered rustics of the neighbouring communes have not failed to be vividly impressed by the remarkable degree of wild and hopeless desolation which characterizes Guildo and its neighbouring stream; and there is a degree of poetical beauty and congruity with the features of the scene in the legends they have attached to them, which suggested to me the above remark.

Small light skiffs, they say, may be seen to issue from beneath the rock on which the castle stands, when the water is in, and the moon is at the full. White shadowy figures, each in his little vessel, ply a noiseless pair

of oars, and glide rapidly over the wide expanse, leaving a wake behind, marked with a fiery light, which glitters despite the pale moonbeam.

These are the hapless spirits of the unfortunates, whose bodies lie deep in the treacherous sands below. If the moon be obscured by a passing cloud, all vanish with the speed of thought ; and the low, melancholy, distant plashing of the waves towards the mouth of the river, brought fitfully to the ear by the passing gust of the night-wind, is deemed the wailing of these poor pale revellers, for the absence of their cold and silent mistress the lady moon.

When the tide is out, and the dreary stillness of the sands acquires a sterner hue of more unsightly desolation, actors of a different kind are busy on the scene. Strange cries, as of persons in distress, are heard along the shores ; then stranger laughter comes in bursts from many points at once, "as if the fiends kept holiday ;" and lights are seen in the midst of the sands, calculated to mislead the unwary passenger, and beguile him into the most dangerous quicksands. A blaze of light, too, streams at such times from the grey walls of the old castle, and the sound of loud revelry is heard amid the ruins. But

all these strange sights and sounds are well known by the peasants of the district to be the wiles of the demons of the sands, endeavouring to entice unfortunate passengers to their destruction.

Yet, unless fate brings to that disastrous spot some unfortunate stranger, the devils may play their pranks in vain. For not a man of the neighbouring communes will pass the ill-omened ford or beneath the old castle wall after nightfall.

It was nearly one o'clock before I had finished my ruminations on Castle Guildo and the prospect from its walls, and bethought me of the necessity of returning with all speed to the expectant man of the mail at Plancoet. He had promised to wait for me till two o'clock—an hour after his time—and I could scarcely hope for any further indulgence. If he went without me, I had before me the very disagreeable alternative of sleeping at Plancoet, or walking about twenty-five miles more home to Dinan. It behoved me, therefore, to traverse the five miles, or thereabouts, between Guildo and Plancoet, in somewhat less than an hour, and that under a blazing noontide sun.

I set off, at a good round trot, dashed through the astonished village of Crehen

in genuine Johnny Gilpin style, and reached Plancoet five minutes within the stipulated time. There, before the door of the little auberge, I found the mail all ready to start, and the driver, true to his promise, sitting on the door-step of the inn, watch in hand, awaiting my arrival. But it was impossible to encounter twenty-five miles of hot dusty road, without supplying a little of the radical moisture which my forced march had caused me to expend; and although he *was* the mail and an hour behind time, the man of letters being hot and thirsty, and not more than mortal, could not resist the proposition of a bottle of wine before starting. The discussion of this did not take long; but what with the time lost in deliberating whether he would yield to temptation or no, and the delay occasioned by the landlady's tour round the town in search of change for a five-franc piece, which I tendered in payment, it was a quarter past two before the mail left Plancoet that day.

About a league from the town, the road passes, at the distance of little more than half a mile, the ancient chateau of Montafilant. I was anxious to see this, but, under the circumstances, almost despaired of inducing the postman, little as he seemed to care about

minutes and hours, to wait long enough to enable me to do so.

Nevertheless, I was resolved to make the attempt. And, having ascertained that the old man was a true Breton, and extremely proud of his country, and fond of recalling the time when Britanny was an independent sovereignty, I thought that it might be possible to warm him into a sufficient enthusiasm to make him forget letters and letter-bags for a while, especially as he seemed to affect some little pretension to a slight smattering of antiquarianism. So I started off with remarking how very large a number of the illustrious warriors whose fame France claims as her own were Bretons—Duguesclin, Clisson, Arthur of Britanny, all constables of France, and all the most renowned heroes and gallant knights of their day, and all Bretons. Then, in what part of France were there so many and so interesting memorials of those good old times, when many a score of barons bold and belted knights attended their own sovereign's parliament at Rennes!

I saw that the old man's patriotism was on the point of boiling over. "Ah," sighed he, "c'etaient alors, les beaux jours de notre vielle Armorique—les jours des Beaumanoirs — des Rosmadées, des Tournemines, des Ke-

rourserés, des Keranrais," &c. Alas!" quoth I, chiming in, "they are passed. The good knights who raised the piles, whose ruins are still the pride and ornament of the country, are gone; their races have for the most part perished; and their names, though not forgotten by all, have died away from the face of earth. How dearly ought all admirers of 'les bons vieux temps' to cherish and respect the monuments which yet remain to show what they have been! How little did the good Roland de Dinan, lord of Montafilant, look forward to the day when the gallant towers with which he crowned yonder hill should be crumbling stone from stone, and not a descendant of his proud name be left to gather them!"

"There," continued I, pointing to the ruins of which a turn in the road permitted us to catch a glimpse, "there is one of the most interesting castles of Britanny. After all you have been telling me about Guildo, I should have liked very much to hear your opinion of Montafilant. Do n't you think we could just stop a minute and have a look at it?"

I saw that he could not resist the temptation held out to him of being listened to with deference on his favourite subject, while he delivered "his opinions" on moats and bar-

bicans, and towers and battlements. He affected to hesitate a little, muttering something about having been too late every day that week; but concluded by observing that, at all events, it was already too late to have any hope of being in time to-day. And, so upon the principle, I suppose, of its being as well to be hung for stealing a sheep as a lamb, he drew up to a gateway by the roadside, saying, as he pointed up a little valley which opened upon the road, "C'est par ici donc, s'il faut y aller absolument." With these words, which made me suspect that this was not his first deviation from the high-road of letters into the bye-paths of antiquarian lore, he tied his old horse to the gate-post, and, leaving him in charge of his majesty's mail, and the letter-bags, and his own coat, which he threw off, proceeded to show the way up the valley.

He was a fine hale handsome old man, sixty-two years old he told me, and somewhat inclined to Falstaffian proportions. But he breasted the hill gallantly, and scrambled across hedges and ditches, and then along a heather-covered hill-side, with an activity that made me wish I had left my coat also in charge of Dobbin.

After twenty minutes' good walking and

running, we reached the hill on which the ruins stand. The situation is similar to that in which many feudal strongholds were placed, and which for obvious reasons would be a favourite position in the days when men lived according to

> "The good old rule, the simple plan,
> That they should catch who have the power,
> And they should keep who can."

A small isolated hill, standing at the point where three valleys meet, secured an advantageous position for the chieftain's place of strength, and the command of the valleys, which were then the only part of the country cultivated or uncovered by thick forest.

A large proportion of the country around Montafilant is, at the present day, covered with woods, which deserve, however, the name of coppice, rather than the dignified appellation of forest. A farmer has established his homestead among the ruins, and the principal court of the castle was occupied by a flourishing crop of flax. The plan of the building may be traced here much more easily than at Guildo, and its angular and square shape, and the disposition of its defences, prove it to belong to the thirteenth or end of the twelfth century.

One of the corner towers remains in a state

which proves the goodness of the masonry. It has been rent from top to bottom, either by the foundation having given way, or by a mine at the time of the destruction of the fortress. One half lies in scattered ruins in the foss, while the other still stands erect, though threatening apparently to fall before the first gust of wind.

In the interior of the building may be seen the openings of several subterraneous constructions, but they were choked with rubbish. We observed the position of the huge kitchen chimney—frequently one of the last features obliterated—together with the enormous ovens which yawned beside it. These reminiscences of the jolly good cheer of the olden time were honoured with an especial tribute of the eloquence of my companion, who, contrasting them with the puny accommodations of modern days, spoke with bitter contempt of the degenerate fires, which could only roast ten or a dozen joints at a time, and the miniature ovens, whose utmost capabilities were only adequate to contain a batch, which would have been lost in some old corner of the vast abyss he was admiring.

I should have liked much to have spent an hour or two in rambling among the wooded valleys into which I looked from the castle-hill;

for the ruins are in that stage of decay most favourable for picturesque effect, and the features of the surrounding country are far from uninteresting. But this, of course, was impossible; it was high time to look after the deserted mail, from which any passenger on the high-road during all this time might have selected any despatches he pleased, and to make the best of our way to Dinan.

We found the old horse very patiently hanging his head exactly in the position we had left him; my fat friend resumed his coat, and we once more jogged on homewards; having consumed little more than an hour in our excursion. We had not gone far, however, before the old man, overcome by the heat and the exercise he had taken, fell fast asleep; Dobbin, who seemed to be perfectly well aware of the state of the case, gently fell into a listless walk; and, if I had not assumed the reins, which were dropping from their owner's hands, the Plancoet mail would have been that day four hours-over due at Dinan, instead of two only, as was the case.

CHAPTER XV.

Departure from Dinan — May-day — Dipping Day — Walk to St. Juvat — Jauge Quarries — Breton Auberge — Breton Beds and Bedsteads—Kitchen Furniture—A Village Dinner.

I FOUND, on my return to Dinan, that my companion had passed as busy a day, with his pencil and brushes, among the streets of Dinan and its neighbouring valleys, as I had in antiquarianizing in the environs.

We were both equally well pleased with our day's work. He had brought away several quaint bits of architecture, and striking fragments of scenery, as well as sundry pretty faces selected among the rustic beauties of the surrounding communes, for the purpose of exhibiting the various coiffures of the different villages. And we were both perfectly ready to start on the morrow in quest of new subjects and fresh adventures.

We left Dinan, therefore, at six the next morning by the diligence, intending to avail ourselves of its assistance for a few miles, in

order to shorten a little a day's work, which my companion — not so determined a pedestrian as myself — thought rather too long. Our plan was to sleep at St. Jouan de l'Isle, a little town on the Rance, about eighteen or twenty miles to the south of Dinan. But, instead of keeping the high-road, we purposed following the course of the river, which would make the distance nearly, if not, quite double. This was a rather formidable day's walk, as any pedestrian will admit, who knows the difference between walking a given number of miles along a good road, and traversing the same distance along the course of a river, where the traveller must find his own path how he can. Under these circumstances, I was not sorry, to tell the truth, to yield to my companion's proposal, that we should go by diligence to Evran, a "chef lieu de canton" on the Rance, about two leagues from Dinan.

This measure, therefore, having been determined on, we climbed to the "banquette" of the diligence, exactly as the churches of Dinan were chiming six o'clock, on a most lovely and merry morning of the first of May.

We had been much pleased with Dinan, during our few days' stay there; and I am

well contented to think that the inhabitants must have been equally pleased with us. For the kind-hearted people fired salvo after salvo of cannon after us, as we rattled out of the town, as a token of their respect and good feeling; though the conductor said that it was because it was his majesty Louis-Philippe's fête-day. But, whether it were for us or for his majesty that the good folks were firing, it must be confessed that the occasion caused very little sensation among the inhabitants of the town, none of whom seemed to quit or suspend their ordinary employments.

After quitting the immediate neighbourhood of Dinan, the rest of our drive to Evran was not marked by any great beauty of scenery, beyond the bright and laughing gladness, which a morning sun and a cloudless sky, in the merry month of May, must always impart to green fields, cowslip-spangled banks, and hedges fragrant with May-flower.

The commune of Evran has little to invite or to detain a traveller. The Beaumanoirs had a residence there, but it has been completely modernized, and is no longer an object either of beauty or interest.

We had done nothing yet to "earn our breakfasts;" and we should have liked better

to have walked some eight or ten miles more of the day's journey, which lay before us, before we drew rein. But there are other reasons for eating besides being hungry. One is, " lest you may be by and by." And this seemed very likely to be our case, unless we availed ourselves of the opportunity offered by the " chef lieu de canton." For the map seemed to corroborate the assertion of the people of Evran, that we should find no breakfast between that and St. Jouan.

It appeared, on a little further inspection, that even Evran itself was not likely to offer the means of any very satisfactory repast. But, as it was clearly a case of now or never, there was no room for hesitation, and we entered the only cabaret in the place, which had the smallest external promise of being any thing better than a cider-shop.

I shall never forget the scene which presented itself to our eyes on entering, nor the concomitant agremens which forced themselves upon the attention of our other senses. But I despair of conveying the general effect to the reader.

The room on which the street-door opened, and in which we n w found ourselves, was a large, low chamber, lighted by one moderate-sized and very dirty window, which ad-

mitted scarcely light enough to illuminate the more distant and obscure corners of the den. A staircase of unpainted deal, with a door at the bottom of it, opened upon the lower end of the apartment. Almost the whole of the upper end was occupied by an enormous fireplace, within the capacious sides of which were seats. The disposition of the moveables in the remainder of the room it would be difficult to describe; as all semblance or pretension to order had given way before the paramount importance of the great mystery, which was at the moment of projection at the time of our inopportune arrival.

This was nought less than the manufacture of the whole stock of candles, intended for the supply of the family for the next twelve months. On the fire, which blazed and crackled on the capacious hearth, was an enormous brazen cauldron, containing, I should think, about four gallons of liquid grease, which was simmering, bubbling, and hissing, in the most cheerful and agreeable manner possible. Seated on the benches, within the jambs on either side, were two old crones — inimitable personifications of Macbeth's witches — who were, with double toil and trouble, stirring up the mighty pool from

its lowest depths, collecting the gross scum which rose to the surface, and flinging it over the brim on to the hissing fire, which, shooting up in bright jets of flame to lick the edge of the cauldron, seemed waiting with eagerness to lap up its share of the unclean nutriment. The old hags engaged in this pleasing office, with their long, shrivelled arms, and sharp, grinning jaws, shown to the most witch-like advantage, in the dark ingle-nook, by the red light of the fire, seemed to snuff up, with " measureless content," the savoury odour which their occupation excited.

The whole of the room was crowded with women, young and old, engaged in various preparatory cares, all tending to the same great object. Some were twisting the cotton wicks, some splitting rushes, and some arranging various vessels in readiness to receive their portions of the contents of the cauldron, so that the process of dipping might proceed in sundry parts of the room at the same time.

I felt inclined to give up all purpose of breakfast in such a place and at such a time as neither desirable nor possible. But it was necessary to state our business to the mistress of the house, who looked up from her occupation to inquire it, with a face and neck

as red, as hot, and as greasy, as if — like a Naiad of the melting-pot — she had just emerged from her own cauldron.

Contrary to my expectations, however, she made no difficulties when we said that we were in search of breakfast; but, on the contrary, remarked that we were in good time, for the pot was ready to come off the fire directly, and that then she would get us some breakfast forthwith. So saying, she opened the door at the foot of the staircase, and motioned us to mount to the room above.

I felt some curiosity to stay and see the great moment — the taking of the cauldron from the fire—for it rather puzzled me to conceive how the women would be able to manage it. But the odour of the boiling rancid fat was so thick and heavy throughout the room, as to be, without exaggeration, insupportable even to the blunted olfactory sensibilities of an old traveller. The vapour seemed to be almost palpable. I felt greasy all over; and had a sensation in the mouth and throat which felt as if it could only have been produced by swallowing tallow till I was full to the gorge.

I bolted up the open staircase, therefore, with very little inclination, as it may be easily conceived for the promised breakfast,

yet, thinking that a cup of coffee, however bad, might serve to wash the tallow from my throat. Up stairs we found a large room with a bed in each corner, and a very heterogeneous and extensive assortment of attire, male and female, occupying every chair, table, and peg, and most part of the floor. Some, also, hung from the ceiling.

We both rushed to the one window, and there, with our heads stretched out as far into the open air as the smallness of the aperture would permit, we awaited the arrival of breakfast. That this was to be prepared in that apartment from which we had just escaped was a painful consideration, upon which I resolved not to permit my mind to dwell. They could not have dipped candles in their coffee-pot; and I permitted myself rather to enjoy the anticipation of that part of the breakfast.

I will leave it to the intelligent and discriminating reader to conceive what, under these circumstances, my feelings must have been when the door opened, and I saw on turning round, as the sole preparation of the promised repast, an enormous deep dish of fried sausages. Faugh! The family stores had been robbed of at least two pounds of dips, to supply the ocean of grease in which

the saturated sops of sausage floated "few and far between." A hunch of sandy bread and a jug of abominable cider were the only other constituent parts of this "breakfast."

Carefully turning our backs upon the hateful sausages, and resolutely endeavouring not to smell them, we swallowed hastily a portion of the bread, washed it down with a draught of cider, whose vinegar-like properties acted at least as a corrective to the oiliness of every thing around and about us, and prepared to leave the house without delay.

But for this purpose it was necessary once again to traverse the intolerable atmosphere of the room below. We passed with a rapid step, and without drawing breath. But things had decidedly become worse; for, instead of the one great reservoir on the fire, a hasty glance showed a dozen different vessels of different descriptions, distributed in every possible corner of the space, from which every member of the family, and the neighbours who apparently had come in to help and enjoy the fun, were engaged hot, fast, and furious in dipping, some two, some three, some four, wicks at a time, and withdrawing the embryo candles reeking from each dip with a fresh steaming supply of the odious material.

It was some time after we had left Evran

behind us, before we seemed purified by the fresh air from the pollution we had passed through.

We crossed the river not far from Evran, and then, leaving the road, struck across the fields, intending, with the river for our guide, to find our way as we could to St. Juvat. I never had a more delightful walk. The apple-trees were in blossom, and were scattered through the fields in such abundance as to perfume the whole atmosphere. The general air of richness, and bright smiling beauty which these impart to the valley, reminded me delightfully of many a ramble among the superb pastures and abounding orchards of Devonshire.

The water-meads of St. André-des-eaux were next to be crossed — a wide extent of low grounds on the bank of the river, watered also by two nameless tributaries, which here bring their unostentatious contributions to the Rance. Nothing could look more inviting than the expanse of rich verdure, enamelled with myriads of wild flowers of every hue, which we saw before us. But treacherous are the smiles of the Naiad of the water-mead. Checked, crossed, intersected, hemmed in on every side we soon found ourselves inextricably involved in a labyrinth of bright,

clear, swiftly-running streams, of every dimension, from little ditches, which a step might span, to rivulets at which a good leaper would pause.

We were not altogether new to the exercise; and an absolute necessity of arriving at the other bank is a marvellous "spur in the side of your intent" as you make your spring. But, with our utmost agility—and we were not altogether heavy-heeled jumpers—St. André-des-eaux would not permit us to escape out of his territory dry-shod.

Another hour's walk brought us, after sundry deviations, to inspect the ruins of a grange, or read the inscriptions in a church-yard, or try the sketchability of a water-mill, to the village of St. Juvat, one of the host of Breton saints, who, with a fate the reverse of that of the prophets of old, are saints only in their own country, and never received any other canonization than that bestowed by the reverence and respect of their countrymen.

In the commune of St. Juvat, and not far from the village, are the principal quarries of a somewhat curious substance, called Jauge. The basin enclosed by the granitic heights of Dinan, which are a spur of the Méné range, and those of Becherel, contains a tertiary calcareous matter, deposited at some former

period by retiring water. It is obtained, also, in three or four of the neighbouring communes by the inhabitants, who have only lately begun to appreciate its value in agriculture. A precisely similar substance is well known both to the farmer and the geologist, in Touraine, under the appellation of Falun.

In the basin of the Rance, the Jauge is of two sorts — an upper stratum of loose calçareous matter, consisting, apparently, almost entirely of shells, pulverized to the size of common sand, and a lower and older stratum of the same, or nearly the same, materials, larger in the grain, and compressed to the consistency of a light porous stone. This stone does not form one solid block, but is found in beds of unequal thickness, one over the other, not placed horizontally, but sloping towards the south. The total thickness of the deposit of Jauge is not perfectly known, because, at a depth of fifty feet below the surface, the workmen are stopped by water.

This depth of fifty feet brings the shaft in the works at St. Juvat about to the level of the river. And it is remarkable that the water in the shaft follows the rise of that in the river, but not till two days after the flood has taken place in the Rance.

The thickness of the bed of Jauge above

the level of the water varies from twenty to five and twenty feet, and that of the calcareous sand above it, though very various, may average from fourteen to sixteen feet. The bed of diluvial soil which covers the sand may average about fifteen or twenty feet.

The stone which they obtain from these quarries, though very soft, friable, and easily worked, acquires sufficient hardness from being exposed to the action of the atmosphere to be used in building. The softness of it, when first quarried, tempts the native architects to essay a little ornamental sculpture; and the result of their skill and taste may be observed in sundry grotesque carvings, which adorn the corners, chimneys, etc. of many of the houses of St. Juvat and the neighbouring villages.

In the early ages of Christianity, this stone was in much requisition as the material for coffins; many of which have been found hollowed out of masses of it. In the present day, it is valuable in more ways than one. It forms a most excellent manure, and a great quantity is used as a flux in the iron smelting-houses among the Méné hills.

The shells and other organic remains found in these two beds of sand and Jauge are very various, including Univalves, Bivalves, and

Multivalves, as well as Coraloides, and Zoophytes. It is said also that shells have been found which are now peculiar to the eastern seas—a phenomenon similar to that which I have spoken of as occurring in a bed of sand near Havre. Petrified teeth, eyes, fins, &c. of fish are frequently found.

The whole of the valley of the Rance is well worth the examination of a geologist. The date of the formations of which I have been speaking appears to be considered doubtful by the savants of the neighbourhood. For, while some, with the greater probability as it appears to me, refer them to the period of the deluge, others adduce the singular fact of an anchor and certain vestiges of quays having been discovered in the commune of St. Juvat, in the year 1805, as a proof that a much more recent date should be assigned to them.

Taking into consideration the circumstances of our very slight breakfast at Evran, and the fatiguing nature of our walk thence, we deemed ourselves by this time entitled to a little rest, and such refreshment as we might be able to meet with. So, on quitting the Jauge quarries, we proceeded to the village, though without any very high expectations as to the entertainment we should find there.

We were agreeably surprised, therefore, on entering the door of what looked like a farm-house, but was marked as a place of public entertainment by the withered bush hanging over the door, with a bottle suspended in the midst of it, to find every promise of the means of satisfactorily supplying the deficiencies of the Evran breakfast.

We found ourselves in a large but low kitchen, which derived at least as much of the light it enjoyed from the huge fire blazing on the hearth, as from the one small and dirty window. A very satisfactory scent saluted our noses as they first entered the hospitable mansion ; and our eyes soon discovered that our arrival was most opportune. For the mid-day meal was on the point of being placed upon the table, and our proposition of joining the company who were about to partake of it having been graciously heard by the land-lady, we had before we fell to a few moments of leisure to observe the scene around us.

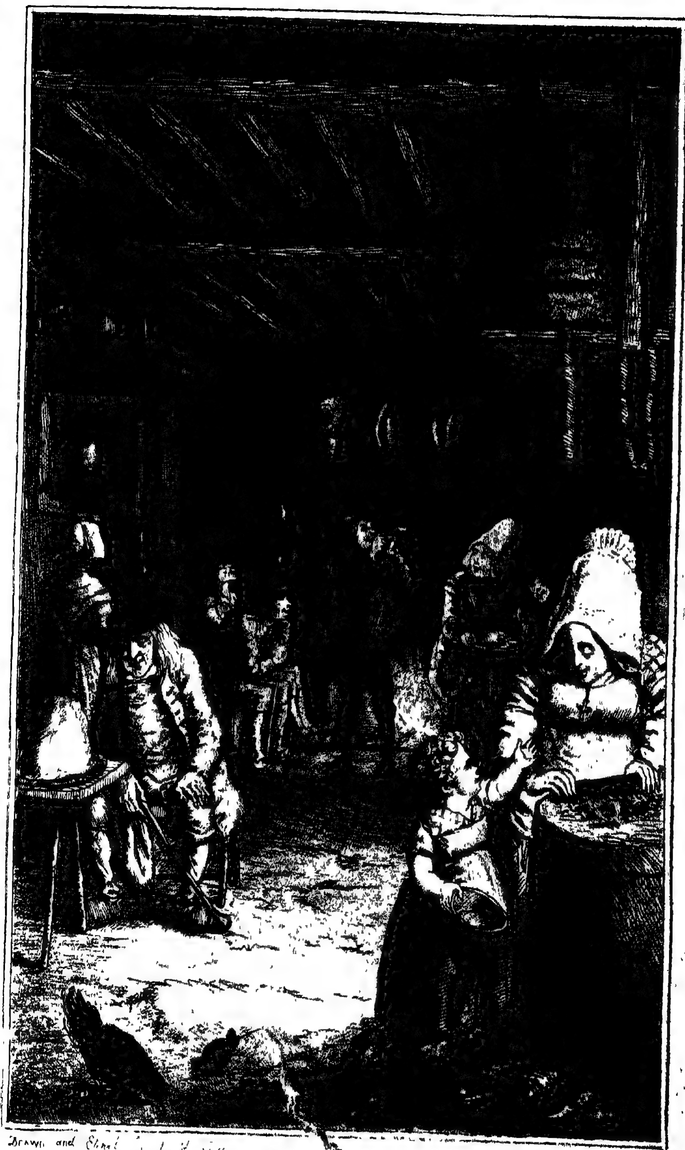
Though the room was large, and the style of its accommodations rather better than those of most of the road-side " cabarets" we had seen, it was still evidently nothing but a village drinking-shop ; and doubtless we should not have found so fair a promise of good cheer, had it not been that there were

four or five rustics, travellers from another part of the country, and bound to a neighbouring cattle-fair, who had chanced to halt there.

Over the chimney were ranged in a goodly row the wife's pots and pans, shining as brilliantly as well scoured brass could make them. On one side of the ample fire-place was the invariable box bedstead. This is "de rigueur" in a Breton cottage. On the side of the fire-place farthest from the door there invariably stands a huge dark oaken piece of furniture, which would have the exact appearance of a clothes-press, were it not that in the side next the fire there is a square aperture, which discloses a pile of mattresses reaching nearly to the top of the machine. This is the bed of the master and mistress.

Very frequently a similar box on the opposite side, but exhibiting a less monstrous pile of bedding, is the resting-place of the maid, or of any other member of the family.

The aperture, which is left as the sole means of access to the interior of this retreat, is furnished with sliding doors, generally—as well, indeed, as the whole of the front of the bed—handsomely carved. So that the occupant may, if he so please, entirely shut himself in.



Drawn and Etched [illegible]

This is termed a " lit clos," for which I should think " a close bed " must be a very appropriate translation. Indeed it is marvellous how the owner of a handsomely furnished " lit clos " can breathe in it, or even get into it at all, so great a proportion of the enclosed space is occupied by mattresses and beds, piled one on another. I have seen in the cottage of a labourer, where no furniture, and scarcely the utensils necessary to cook a meal, were to be found, a pile of bedding four feet high!

It may easily be conceived how far such a mass, never moved, and surrounded by filth of all kinds, is likely to conduce to health and cleanliness. The only water which a Breton peasant much cares to use is holy water; and of this a little " benitier" full, surmounted by a cross, is invariably attached to his portentous bedstead.

In front of this bedstead is seen, almost as invariably as itself, a large oaken chest, the same length as the bed, about twenty inches high, and as much broad. This is always the seat of honour, and serves also as a step to assist mine hostess in mounting to her exalted couch.

All this formed a scene far too graphic and characteristic to escape the artistic eye of my

companion. The ready sketch-book was in an instant in his hand; and, in a very few minutes, a rapid sketch transferred to its pages, the scene of which the adjoining etching is a faithful portraiture.

The seat of honour, above mentioned, was occupied, as will be observed from the sketch, by two of the cattle-drivers from the Méné hills, while another is lighting his "brule-gul" with a morsel of burning wood from the fire. The two sisters, who kept the house, were both "on hospitable cares intent," the one taking up a roast quarter of veal from the fire, and the other mincing meat and herbs together, for the production of some delicacy intended for the second course.

Opposite to her sat, apart from the rest, being apparently not one of their party, a perfect picture of an old man, with the most beautiful streaming, silvery locks, a charming old-world cocked hat on his head, and the most picturesquely patched coat conceivable. Immediately in front of him, as if it had been placed there as his share of the coming repast, was one of those gigantic pats of butter in a lordly dish, which constitute the wealth and glory of a Breton farm-house. The mass in question might have weighed some thirty pounds, and was probably destined to be sent on the following day to Dinan market.

To complete the detail of this somewhat lengthy inventory of the parts of the chamber and its contents, it must be added that the floor was of clay, and, notwithstanding the refuse of vegetables and the poultry which the conscientious artist has duly exhibited, was cleaner and in better order than the generality of those we saw; and that from the ceiling was suspended the most heterogeneous collection of every sort of thing conceivable. Sausages, shoes, hams, candles, onions, bladders full of lard, tin pots, and earthenware pipkins, sabots, crucifixes, horseshoes, bottles, and cart-harness, were hung up side by side, jostling each other in most admirable confusion.

Long, however, before my observations had enabled me to compile so full a catalogue of this very interesting museum, (though it has by no means any pretensions to be considered a complete one) we had all sat down to dinner. And although it must be confessed that the murdered innocent, from whose lacerated haunches we were hacking polygonal lumps of flaccid flesh, had been by man's impatient hand somewhat prematurely cut off in the earliest dawn of calfhood—and that the disinterested miller had sent home a considerable portion of the substance of his

own mill-stones, carefully ground down to the size of coarse salt, and well mixed with the flour — nevertheless, by the aid of that sauce which neither Burgess nor Harvey can compete with, I made a very tolerable dinner.

Depend upon it that, of all the various receipts for securing a good appetite for dinner, there is none equal to going without your breakfast.

Immediately after dinner our cattle-driving friends swallowed their "goutte," and departed. I thought that the somewhat large portion of calfling which improvident hunger had induced me to swallow, demanded the digestive process of café noir and a cigar. So, assuming the dignities of the vacated chest-seat—no uncomfortable position by the side of a cheerful wood fire — we "let in smoke the moments flee," till two o'clock, sounded from the belfry of the neighbouring church, warned us that it was time once more to resume our route.

CHAPTER XVI.

Ornamented Crucifixes—Breton Saints—Origin of them—Legend—Village of Guenroc—French Taste—View of the Valley of the Rance—Walk to Caulnes—Fair there—Quarters at St. Jouan—French Beds and Bed-rooms—Fine Arts in the Provinces—A Philanthropist—Inn Kitchen—A Frenchman's first glass of Punch "à l'Anglaise"—The Notable History of the Duck of Montfort.

As we passed through the churchyard of St. Juvat, on quitting the little cabaret, which had afforded so unexpectedly good a meal, we observed one of those grotesquely carved crucifixes so common in some parts of Brittanny. These are, frequently, so elaborately adorned, and contain so many additions to the one original subject, that the form of a cross is entirely lost; and the appearance of the erection, which is still so called, is that of a large slab or block of stone, the sides of which are sculptured into rude bas-reliefs, representing various scenes in the life of our Saviour.

I could not but fancy that these miscalled

crosses were very appropriately typical of the religion which had raised them. For the simple form of the symbolic cross is not more lost and obliterated in these redundantly ornamented constructions, than the original features of primitive Christianity are hidden and overlaid by the spurious additions and inventions of the later ages of the Roman church.

The subjects chosen for the two faces of the square slab, which, supported by a long, slender stone pillar, formed the pride of the churchyard of St. Juvat, were, on one side, the Saviour on the cross between the two thieves, and on the other a group of the three Maries. The last, though of course rude, is not without a degree of merit in the execution, which it surprises one to find in such a place. The two thieves were, as usual, grotesque monsters, exhibiting the most approved hideousness of visage, and impossible contortions of limb and body. Each had a devil perched upon his shoulder, grinning most expressively in his face, and waiting apparently not too patiently the moment of dissolution to carry off the soul.

It is remarkable, that in these productions the artist very frequently represents the thieves as both under the same spiritual as

well as bodily condemnation. I suppose tha in these cases the work is intended to represent the scene at a time previous to the opening of the mind of the one thief to the light of truth and the grace of repentance.

From St. Juvat, still following, though at some little distance, the course of the Rance, we walked on to St. Maden, another of the numerous Breton army of martyrs, for such were both he and St. Juvat—who, like officers holding colonial rank, are not found rated as saints in the calendars set forth by Rome as those of her own making. The fact is, that the designations of the vast quantity of villages in Britanny, called after saints unheard-of elsewhere, preserve the name of some early priest and preacher of the new religion—perhaps the earliest apostle of the village — whose holy life, or, more probably, whose violent death, entitled him to the veneration and remembrance of his flock.

The legends of many of these remain, and refer for the most part to a much later period than the histories of Rome's more celebrated confessors and martyrs. For, it must be remembered, that Christianity had yet to be introduced into Britanny, when it had already become the religion of the rest of France; and that for centuries afterwards the work of

establishing it in all parts of the country and in the hearts of the people was yet to do. Perhaps in no country, which has ever become Christian, did the work of Christianization proceed so slowly, or meet with so much opposition from the superstitions and prejudices of the people, as in Britanny. No idolatrous priesthood was so long able to oppose the missionaries of the revealed religion, or so pertinaciously to corrupt its doctrines and ordinances by the mixture of their own ideas and observances as the Armorican Druids.

Hence, for many years, and up to a comparatively late period, it was a work of difficulty and danger to preach a new faith to a rude and fierce people, constitutionally attached in a remarkable degree to the existing order of things, and, above all other races of men, intolerant of innovation on their accustomed and inherited habits, manners, and ideas.

These circumstances of the early history of Armorican Christianity render very intelligible the otherwise inexplicable multitude of sainted names which abound in every part of the province. Thus, in one village we find a legend which tells of the death of seven thousand seven hundred and seventy-seven saints, in one place, and at one time.

Without being outrageously sceptical, a person might at first sight regard this as a monstrous and most absurd fiction. Not at all! Placing the marvellous recurrence of the "seven" to the account of the old chronicler's love for the strange and the quaint, and allowing somewhat of exaggeration to the common propensity of tale-tellers to make that which is great, greater, the story is intelligible enough. A whole village, perhaps all the inhabitants of some larger district — a tribe — who professed Christianity, were attacked, overpowered, and slaughtered by a neighbouring tribe professing Paganism.

Such an occurrence, in itself by no means improbable, would have amply sufficed to render all the sufferers saints in the estimation of their fellow Christians of that period. And the story of their fate would have been eagerly received by the wonder-loving legend-gatherers of a later generation, and carefully handed down by them for the use and benefit of posterity, with the addition of any little ornamental circumstances which their own ever ready inventions might suggest,

.Many of the legends, which have thus been preserved in almost every village throughout the country, are curious, and sometimes not unamusing. But of St. Maden, whose un-

familiar name has led us so far away from the obscure little village in the valley of the Rance, of which he is the patron, and was probably once the priest, no more is recorded than that he lived there a holy life, and died a violent death.

A little farther on we reached the pretty village of Guenroc, situated on a little wooded hill, with a château more picturesquely placed among plantations on the side of it than is usually the case with French mansions. The position and general appearance of the few modern gentlemen's residences scattered over the country, as well as of those which, in greater number, are usually found in the immediate neighbourhood of the towns, seem to argue, for the most part, an extraordinary degree of insensibility in their owners to natural beauty or picturesque effect.

A Frenchman builds a large, square, white house, with four rows of square windows in the front, and five windows in each row. Each window has six large square panes of green glass, set in very cumbrous and heavy white wooden frame-work ; and all the twenty have two huge Venetian blinds, which fold back on either side, occupying the greatest part of the space between the windows, and which are painted of a very bright pea-green.

In the middle there is an equally pea-green door, with a very fine bright brass knocker. The edifice is placed a hundred yards from the high road, with the front accurately parallel with it. A white fence of perpendicular rails, and a gate in the middle, between two large red brick pillars, with white wooden balls on the top of them, divide this space, which is carefully kept barren, from the high-road. A row of six poplars before the house, three on each side of the door, completes the tout ensemble of a dwelling of which the owner is proud, and the passers-by say, "Ah! que c'est gentil ça!" with a gentle, calm smile, which is intended to convey the concentrated expression of a whole Arcady of sylvan beauty and rural felicity.

Many of the larger châteaus, which are found here and there, though so rarely in comparison with the rich frequency of "the merry homes of England," are of course not intended to be included in the above description.

It was principally the pretty plantations around the château, on the side of the hill, which gave to the village on the top of it that sheltered and agreeable appearance which induced us to visit it. For it cost us a little deviation from our line to do so, as it lies too

much to the left to have fallen into our direct route.

The river is, in this part of the valley, much narrower than lower down, and above this it rapidly loses its claim to be called more than a rivulet. But the valley is here far from deficient in attractive scenery. From the little eminence on which Guenroc is situated, a very good idea of the general features of the country may be formed. The whole of the extensive valley, bounded by the two leading ranges of hill, the heights of Becherel, and those of the Méné, may be seen, and the aperture between them may be traced in the distance beyond St. Jouan, where the valley turns to the west.

But, while we stood gazing at the fine wavy line of mountains in this direction, the rapidly setting sun warned us that if we would not have a portion of our course to traverse after he had finished his, it would not do to linger. The reddening light was already casting a warmer hue on the brown tops of the Méné, and many an alternate stripe of lengthening shadow and decreasing light was marking the hollows and ridges of their rugged sides, when we once more turned our faces towards St. Jouan.

After descending the hill on which Guenroc

stands, and scrambling over two or three hedges, we regained the track across the fields which we had quitted, and following it, soon arrived at the beginning of a long birch avenue. This promised to be an agreeable variation of our walk. For shade may be much more easily dispensed with, in my opinion, when the sun is high above your head, than when an hour or so before setting he keeps impertinently peeping under the brim of your hat, and twinkling his red eye in your face, with an impudence that puts you quite out of countenance.

But the promises held out to weary travellers by the birch avenue were as illusory as many others, for we found it a perfect bog from one end to the other; and were, therefore, once more glad of the change, when, from the avenue, we emerged upon a wide heathery common.

Here, however, was a new difficulty. The track, which had hitherto been strongly marked enough to guide us as long as it had passed through cultivated grounds, diffused itself over the common with a sort of ad libitum vagueness, which I could not but think was taking a very unfair advantage of its emancipation from hedges and ditches. It went, turning, first one way and then

another, to every point in the compass, long enough to give you time to forget entirely which way you were going, and then, dividing itself suddenly into a variety of paths, all fac-similes of each other, went off in every direction at once.

This sort of thing is all very well when the sun is in the east, and you are as fresh as he is, and feel as if you were as able to traverse moor and forest, hill, dale, and meadow; but it is not so pleasant at the fag-end of a hard day's walk, with your quarters still some miles off.

As luck would have it, however, when we were in the acme of our perplexity, we met a man walking across the common, and knitting as he went, who told us that, by pursuing a certain path which he pointed out, we should fall into a road which would bring us to Caulnes, a village only half a league from St. Jouan. He added, moreover, that there was a fair at Caulnes, and that we should meet plenty of people coming home from it who could direct us.

He was quite right in both respects. We soon reached the road, and then "the flux of company" left us no doubts as to which was the way to the fair. Our industrious friend of the common, however, had perhaps ven-

tured a little too far in asserting that the good folks we were to meet could direct us on our road, had it been needful, inasmuch as that appeared rather too arduous a task for many of them to perform for themselves. One old lady and her sow we saw lying very cozily and contentedly together in the ditch.

We reached Caulnes with the last of the light; and had thence only half a league to walk to St. Jouan. The fair was pretty well over, but the traces of its business and its revelry were visible in all directions. The village street had been ploughed into mire, ancle-deep, by the trampling of cattle and sheep; and the air seemed loaded with the mingled fumes of cider, men, cattle, and tobacco. A few late revellers were still dropping, one by one, from the numerous cabarets and cider-houses, as we walked down the street, and feeble sounds of revelry, still kept up by a few determined topers, proceeded from many of the booths, erected here and there, at short intervals, through the village.

Though it was pretty well dark when we left Caulnes behind us, there was no difficulty in finding our way to St. Jouan. For the whole inhabitants of the town seemed to be returning from the fair, in a procession of not

the most orderly or decorous description. Many a human beast was finding his way homewards, under the care and guidance of his horse: and I saw one very drunken man who had retained just sense enough to keep tight hold of his cow's tail, and being, with that assistance, just able to keep his legs, was dragged home by the more rational brute of the two.

It was near nine when we reached St. Jouan, and we had no difficulty in finding the "Tête Noire," which was the ensign of the hostelry, we had been told, was the best. But we were somewhat dismayed at the miserable appearance of the house, whose front presented, on the upper story, one moderate-sized window, and one other aperture about a foot square. We learned to be less fastidious before our tour was over; but now, tired as we were, we did not enter the "Tête Noire" till we had wandered up and down the one street of the little town, and ascertained beyond a doubt, that it was not only the best, but also the only inn in the place. "Buchons," or drinking-houses, there were plenty; but the Tête Noire alone aspired to the reception of travellers for the night. And, to tell the truth, we found, that in the Tête Noire, as is the case with some other

heads, the resources of the interior had been more cared for than the appearance of the exterior. The bedrooms were very small, opening into a little court behind the house, and entered one through the other. They seemed, however, to be tolerably clean, and, though perfectly void of any one single article, except each its bed, that bed seemed a very good one.

Indeed, the beds in France are almost always good; and bed-making is, I think, one of the arts that we might most advantageously learn from our neighbours. I have slept in far better beds, in remote little village inns in France, than are to be found in many a first-rate hotel in the large towns in England. The sheets may be coarse, to be sure, and as brown as homespun unbleached yarn can make them; but they are not considerably higher at the foot than at the head. The pillow is not a miserable abortion, which you might put in your coat-pocket by mistake for your pocket-handkerchief. And the bed is not puffed up by some secret process — the glory and grand arcanum of English chambermaids — into the similitude of a haycock, which, when you throw yourself upon its inviting bosom, becomes as accurate a representation of the surface of a ploughed field.

But having accorded due praise to the bed, there is nothing more to be said in favour of a French bedchamber. If not absolutely bare, as at St. Jouan, it is not much better. If long habits of intercourse with England have in some degree introduced the notion of washing as connected with the process of going to bed and rising from it, and they do allow you a pie-dish, with a small decanter of water, and a napkin, still soap is never furnished; and a variety of little comforts, which the luxury and cleanliness of English habits have made so common, that their presence is neither thought of nor heeded, are brought to your mind by their absence from a French chamber.

In other respects, our reception at the Tête Noir was by no means so bad as we had anticipated. A little strip, partitioned off from the spacious kitchen, served as a "salle a manger," where, on our arrival, we found two persons awaiting a supper, which the neat-handed Phillis who was preparing it said would suffice for us also.

The master and mistress of the inn had gone to the fair at Caulnes, and had not yet returned. But we were given to understand that the supper was not to await their arrival; and in a few minutes it made its

appearance, in the shape of a tureen of "soup à l'onions," more of the eternal veal, eggs, "sur le plat," and very good bottled beer.

Our companions were an "employé" of some sort under the government—the constant guests at a table d'hôte in the small towns—and an itinerant merchant of coloured prints, who had been attending the fair at Caulnes. His stock consisted chiefly of devotional subjects, printed from wood blocks, rudely cut, and still more rudely coloured. The majority of them were a large assortment of Holy Virgins, designated after different places, and many of them having a few lines of legend printed at the bottom, with sometimes a short prayer added. A good many were printed at Strasbourg, and exhibited their few lines of letter-press in both German and French.

Among these was a most notable portrait of the wandering Jew. Our Saviour on the cross, together with the two thieves, and the domes and spires of Jerusalem, are seen in the distance, while the whole of the foreground is occupied by a large figure of the wanderer himself, in a long red frock coat, top boots, and a cocked hat. An enormous beard, painted bright yellow, is hanging from his chin, and a huge bunch of seals from his watch-chain. He carries a long stick in his

hand, and is walking at a pace which clearly indicates that, although he must live till the end of the world, he has nevertheless no time to lose.

Another great favourite among his customers was a most splendidly coloured representation of purgatory. A great variety of heads and shoulders of men, women, and children, were seen rising above an ocean of red and yellow flames. Their hands were all held in the attitude of prayer to the person looking at the picture, imploring them not to spare a little cash to assist in getting them out. Who could fail, after contemplating this, to drop a sou in the "Tronc pour les ames en Purgatoire" the next time they went to church.

We had a good deal of not unamusing conversation with this travelling print-merchant. He was in the habit, he said, of traversing all parts of France, carrying his stock in a neat little covered cart. He seemed quite an enthusiast in his profession, observing that "les beaux arts sont les addoucissements les plus nobles de la vie, et ceux qui les repandent sont les apôtres les plus puissants de la civilization."

He was obliged, however, to vary, as it seemed, his instruments of civilization, accord-

ing to the soil he had to work on. In Britanny, saints, martyrs, and virgins, popes in their pontificals, pictures of large solid-looking angels walking down a broad yellow stripe, intended to represent a sunbeam, from one corner of the paper into the eye of a kneeling figure in the other corner, and representations of sinners on their death-bed, with the devil peeping from under the bedstead, were the most saleable "addoucissements de la vie."

Portraits of Louis-Philippe and his family were plentiful, but by no means equalled in number a very large assortment of Napoleons, in every possible attitude and situation. Some were standing in the midst of a heap of dead bodies with the most unconcerned air possible; some were elevated on the Place Vendôme pillar; some were bestriding a horse, who utterly disdained to avail himself in any way of his fore-legs; some were sitting fast asleep in a chair placed in the middle of a crowded field of battle, with cannon firing in every direction; and some were in heaven, seated on a damp-looking cloud, in the midst of converging sunbeams. Of course those essential parts of the hero, his cocked hat and "Redingote," were preserved throughout. Even in the next world, it should seem, the

French think, like the poor Indian of his dog, that their emperor's "faithful *hat* shall bear him company."

Then there was a large stock of battle-pieces, with a variety of well-known names beneath them, but of which the composition was mainly the same, consisting of a row of nine or ten enormous giants in blue uniforms, and extra-gigantic moustachoes, taking in half the picture at one stride, with a few cannon and corpses lying about in front of them; and, on the other side of the paper, myriads of little pigmy soldiers in red, running away, with their heels thrown up in the air behind them with the utmost agility, in order that there might be no mistake about what they were doing.

Finally, there was a choice little packet of portraits of "le jeune Henri," without any name under them whatsoever; and a variety of miscellaneous subjects, such as four very naked ladies representing the four seasons—the same ladies dressed as the four quarters of the globe—etc., etc., etc.

While looking over all these means of civilization, we had been drinking some green tea with the owner, which he had requested to be procured for him from the apothecary's. I was somewhat surprised at

the order, and still more surprised to find it very good.

When the pot of tea and the prints were both finished, we went to see how things were going on in the kitchen; and, finding there that the host and hostess, a buxom jolly-looking couple, had both returned from the fair — strange to say! — in a very creditable state of sobriety, and a goodly wood-fire crackling and blazing on the hearth, we determined to take up our quarters there for the remainder of the evening.

There was, on either side of the fireplace, one of the huge beds described in the last chapter, with the usual accompanying chest, forming a comfortable seat in front of it. Before the fire we placed a long, heavy bench, which had not been moved for many a day from behind the massive kitchen-table, which extended along one whole side of the apartment. This was a very strong measure to take, and was not ventured upon — be it understood—till we had made some acquaintance with the worthy couple by a little chat, and had bespoken their good opinion by ordering a jug of brandy punch "à l'Anglaise," the composition of which our hostess professed to understand perfectly.

When these arrangements were completed,

nothing could have a more inviting and cheerful appearance than the little inclosure round the fire thus made. A fresh faggot was thrown upon the hearth, and the blaze played merrily upon the shining, polished surface of the carved old oak bedsteads and well rubbed benches. The punch was excellent, as both mine host and the print-merchant allowed. The latter had never tasted such a thing before, and the sort of agreeable surprise which he testified at finding it so, and the sort of crescendo movement of approbation, as he gradully got deeper in his tumbler, was quite amusing. The first sip produced a deliberative "Mais"—another sip—"ce n'est pas mal ça!" Another mouthful was followed by "c'est très agreable!"—another gulp—"parole d'honneur! cela se laisse boire!" one more toss drained the tumbler, and constrained him to admit that it was "alsolument excellent." But I was amused at the man's manner of uttering all these satisfactory admissions, which were spoken with a sort of give-the-devil-his-due profession of candour, and the same kind of surprise which Mrs. Glasse might have been supposed to feel, if she had picked up the first information of some undeniably excellent recipe, entirely new to her, among a nation of savages.

After the merits of the punch had been duly discussed and admitted on all hands, the conversation turned upon our friend's trade. Having first delivered himself of a few of his favourite flourishes about the high and noble ends of his profession, and the gratitude due from mankind to its professors, he remarked, with something like a sneer, that in "la bonne Bretagne" he could sell nothing but portraits of saints, and pictures of miracles. No other part of France was so exclusive in its patronage of the fine arts.

"And with good reason," exclaimed the landlord, "because no other part of France, no, nor of Europe either, has half so many saints or miracles to boast of. C'est veritablement un pays favorisée par le bon Dieu, cette vielle Bretagne! Instead of having too many pictures of the Breton miracles," he went on, warming with his subject, "you have not half enough. I never saw a picture of the great miracle of 'La Canne de Montfort.' If you had a good print of that now I would buy one directly, and so would every body round about here."

The print-merchant had never heard of the "Canne de Montfort;" and, on our avowing equal ignorance, our host, who, though he professed to be much scandalized, was evi-

dently well pleased to have an opportunity of telling the story, refilled his pipe and his tumbler, and commenced the following somewhat singular, and indubitably, accurate relation.

"It is fortunate for you that it is here in my house at St. Jouan de l'Isle, and not at Montfort-la-canne, that you confessed yourselves never to have heard of the well-known miracle from which that town takes its name. For, truly, it is probable that the inhabitants might have been more anxious to punish than to remove so gross a piece of ignorance. Know, then, for the future, that in the town of Montfort, which is not more than six leagues from this very place, about five hundred years ago, was performed, by the grace of God and the intercession of St. Nicholas, one of the most stupendous and undeniable miracles ever known."

The portly narrator, after this impressive preface, paused to take a pull at the punch, and look around to see how it was received. The good wife very placidly went on with her knitting, prepared to hear with perfect resignation the well-known history yet once again. The print-merchant ventured a sly wink at us, but met with no encouragement in his irreverent propensities; for the tone and air

of the good Breton as he told the story, which to him was as a portion of holy writ and a cherished part of his creed, plainly declared that it was a subject upon which he could not easily brook unbelief or ridicule. Besides, had any impieties of the sort been detected, we should have infallibly lost the story, which I began to be curious to hear. So we composed our features into the expression of most serious attention, while our good host thus proceeded.

"It has been often written—the history of this miracle—by many great and learned historians both in prose and verse. And there is a very old song, which I knew well when I was a boy, composed by a religious monk of some order or other many years ago. It tells the whole story from beginning to end much better than I can, and goes to the tune of 'Réveillez vous, belle endormie.' I have sung it many a day from one end to the other; but for my sins, I can recollect now only the first verse, which goes:—

"'Ecoutez le fait memorable
Touchant la Canne de Montfort:
Cette histoire est bien veritable
Et d'en donter on auroit tort.'

"Well," said he with a shake of the head, after singing over again twice the last line, and pausing a while in vain to see if he could

recall the next verse, " at the time when this miracle happened, there lived at Montfort a 'grand seigneur' in the castle, part of which you may still see there to the present day. France, you know, was not like it is now in those days. Not a bit of it! The great lords cared for neither God nor devil, duke nor king, law nor gospel, and did just what they liked in their strong castles. You may see about the country still the ruins of many of them, that have been pulled down to prevent any more devilries being played in them. There's many old stories told of queer things that have been done in them — but I can't tell more than one at a time.

" Well, in those days a poor man had enough to do to take care of his neck, and had no chance of keeping any thing else if he had it; and generally he was best off who had least to lose. Now, in the forest of Montfort, there lived a poor woodman, who had but one thing in the world that he cared much about — and that was his daughter. She was as lovely as the most beautiful lady in any castle in the country, and as good as she was beautiful. Her name was Yvonne.

" Now, Yvonne, more unreasonable than the old man, had two things in the world besides her father which she cared about. But she

had lost one—her heart; and the other—her virtue — she was determined not to lose, despite all the lords in the country.

"The youth who had stolen her other treasure was no lord, bnt a young tanner who lived at Montfort, and who generally walked out to spend his Sundays and holydays with Yvonne and her father in their cottage in the forest. It was upon one of these occasions that Yvonne was persuaded by her lover to walk back with him to Montfort. She would not enter the town, and they parted under the walls at the spot where you may still see the large tower, which is now the town prison.

"Perhaps their parting might have been a little more sudden, if they could have guessed that from one of the windows of the tower the lord of the castle was watching them, like a great vulture waiting the moment to pounce upon his prey.

"Well, I told you that it was no use for a poor man or a poor girl either to hope to keep any thing to themselves in those times; and so you shall see. For, no sooner had this 'grand seigneur' seen Yvonne's pretty upturned face as she parted from her lover, and watched the direction in which her light figure was seen tripping hastily back towards the forest, than he called two of his

ruffian soldiers to him, pointed out to them the still just visible form of the poor girl, and ordered her to be brought back and conducted into the castle immediately.

"Within half an hour poor Yvonne stood trembling before this great man, whose very name made all the poor people of Montfort and the country round shake with fear. Still, God always gives courage to the most timid to do what is right, even in the midst of the greatest dangers, if they are earnestly desirous of doing so. And Yvonne steadily resisted all the dishonourable propositions this terrible man made to her. So she was locked up a prisoner in the topmost story of that same dark-looking old tower. As the song says :—

"'Ils l'amenerent à leur maître,
Qui la fit sous la clef serrer ;
Ce qui lui fit assez connaître
Qu'on voulait la deshonorer.'"

"Yvonne had however still one resource left. She had been piously brought up, and not only had been taught that in all difficulties she ought to trust in God and the Virgin, and the holy Saints, but also knew enough of their lives to be at no loss what saint to apply to in any particular case. She had no hesitation, therefore, in addressing herself, in

her present extremity, to St. Nicholas, whose sympathy for virgins in similar distresses is well known. So, as the song says—telling the story you see brings it to my mind a bit here and a bit there :—

"'Elle eut recours à la prière
S' addressant à saint Nicolas,
Qui par sa bonté singulière,
Tira trois filles d'un tel pas.
Elle promit qu'en son eglise
Elle iroit lui rendre ses vœux
Chaque an, si, par son entremise,
Elle évitait ce pas facheux.'

"The poor child's confidence in the saint's power and benevolence was not without its reward. As when ever did the saints refuse their intercession to those who ask it properly, and with the true intention of paying their vows faithfully?

"Yvonne had scarcely risen from her knees when she suddenly found herself changed into the form of a wild duck. The window was open, and out she flew far away over the great pond, which they say there was in those days where the meadows are now, by the bank of the river Chailloux. What became of her afterwards, or whether good St. Nicholas changed her back again into her own form, for the sake of the young tanner of Montfort, is not known. But it is certain that, for two hundred years after that time, a

wild duck, accompanied by a brood of young ducklings — a circumstance which may, perhaps, be thought to show that, in all probability, the tanner saw no more of his mistress — was seen to make an annual visit to the church of St. Nicholas. And so well was this known to all the inhabitants of Montfort, that the duck and ducklings were regularly expected as the time of their visit came round; and crowds used to assemble to see the wonderful, though accustomed sight.

"Since that period the duck has come from time to time, but not annually, as she used to do. This, probably, arises from the growing wickedness and infidelity of the times; and the result may be seen in the decay of the town, whose walls, as they remain to the present day, shew that it must have been four times as large as it is now.

"There are innumerable signatures of all persons of all sorts and every rank extant, testifying to the fact of their having witnessed the annual return of the duck. And it is recorded that, among others, that great heretic D'Andelot, the brother of the admiral Coligny, who, being at Montfort, refused to believe this wonderful miracle, saying impiously that it was some contrivance of the priests, was compelled by the evidence of his

senses to believe that this duck was in truth something more than common.

"Besides, you have the irrefragable evidence of the name of the town itself, which has ever since been, and always will, for ever more, be called Montfort-la-Canne, in memory of this extraordinary miracle.

"So, Messieurs, I may conclude the story in the words of my old song: —

"'Vous pouvez, aprés cela, croire,
Et sans crainte de vous tromper,
La verité de cette histoire
Dont je viens de vous occuper.'

"And now let us have another glass of punch round, with the permission of 'ces messieurs,' and then go to bed. And if you will take my advice, Monsieur Gervais, you will bring with you the next time you come into Britanny a good print of the miracle of La Canne de Montfort."

Such was our host's story, which, absurd as it is, I found afterwards to be part and parcel of the creed of every peasant in the country; and which, stranger still, is the only account any body can give of the origin of the appellation, Montfort-la-Canne.

I have seen another poem on the subject besides that from which mine host quoted. It is too long to transcribe the whole of it — fifteen stanzas; but there is a naïve quaintness about

it which tempts me to extract a stanza or two. After recounting a variety of experiments which he had made, the results of which always proved, in the most extraordinary manner, that the duck and her brood were no mortal duck and ducklings, the poet goes on.

"La canne a paru tous les temps
Et ses petits, en même forme,
Jamais plus petits, ni plus grands :
Ce qui fait que je me conforme
A la croyance que l'on a
Que c'est la même qui vient là.

"On ne sçait ce qu'elle devient
Ni ses petits, toute l'année,
Ni l'aliment qui les soutient.
La chose bien examinée,
On ne s'e[illegible] jamais aperçû,
Qu'ils ayent mangé, ni qu'ils ayent bû.

"On en a pris pour les nourrir ;
On leur mettoit de la pâture,
En lieu qu'on ne pouvoit ouvrir,
Estant bien fermé de serrure ;
Cependant on ne trouvoit plus,
Ceux qu'on avait ainsi reclus.

"Il est vrai qu'il faut confesser,
Que tout cela *tient du miracle,*"

as the poet candidly allows ; but he adds that God

"veut par cette nouveauté
Nous faire voir la complaisance
Qu'il a pour la virginité."

This is all very well for a popular legend-maker ; but it is curious to find such a man

as Argentré, the historian, and most celebrated legal authority of Britanny, giving perfect credit to this absurd story, and gravely inserting it in his work. He speaks of the tale as " une chose celebrée, que beaucoup de gens ont difficilement creue, mais tres veritable ;" and, after relating it at length, adds —" Ce que j'ay voulu escrire, sçachant que les estrangers l'ont sceu et escrit jusques en Italie, se trouvant au livre de Baptiste Fulgose, grand personnage, et qui fut Duc (Doge) de Genes, registré au tiltre ' De Miraculis' au livre ' De dictis et factis memorabilibus.' " He then goes on to record, as our host had very correctly stated, the conversion of D'Andelot to the belief that the duck was really miraculous.

So much for the " Canne de Montfort," to which I hope the reader will not think that I have helped him too largely.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Receipt of Custom—St. Jouan — Walks to Broons — Castle of La Motte-Broons—The Boyhood of Duguesclin — Breton Costumes—Their Invariability— Coquetry — Toilet of a Bretonne — Kindness of M. le Maire.

It was a good deal later than we had intended it should be when we went up stairs to bed at the conclusion of our worthy landlord's somewhat prolix history of the notable doings of St. Nicholas at Montfort. But not the less were we determined to be up and doing at peep of day the next morning. Nobody knows so well as a pedestrian the true value of these delicious morning hours, before the dew is off the grass, and the youthful sun is sprightly and modestly cheering instead of overwhelming you with oppressive splendour, as when, later in his diurnal life, he has mounted the throne of his noontide majesty.

We had warned our hostess over-night that we should in all probability be stirring in the morning before she was, and that, there-

fore, it was expedient that we should settle our score then. But this, for some reason or other, did not please the good wife, who protested that she should be up as soon as we were, be that when it might. However, when we came down the next morning, not a soul was stirring, and we might have walked out of the house with perfect ease, without troubling any body more about the little ceremony, which had been rejected over-night, if we had so chosen.

We went into the kitchen, however, and, after making a great deal of noise, succeeded in waking the landlady; who poked her head out of the opening of her box-bedstead, and asked what we wanted. When she at length comprehended the state of the case, she sat up in bed, and, with much rubbing of the eyes and scratching of the head, to facilitate which she had thrown off her night-cap, commenced counting the francs and sous upon her fingers.

All this while her husband was snorting away like a grampus on the far side of the "lit clos," and the maid in her's on the other side of the fireplace. At length, the very small sum total of her charges, three francs, sixteen sous, was arrived at; and, tendering four francs in payment, we said our adieux,

and were going out of the room, when she screamed after us that there were four sous "de retour," and was on the point of getting out of bed sans façon to seek them in the "tiroir" of the kitchen-table. We had some difficulty in persuading her to abandon her intention of doing so, and left her utterly unable to comprehend what our possible motives could be for refusing to receive the four sous, which were righteously due to us.

We saw a little more of St. Jouan, as we walked out of it this morning, than we had in the dark last night. It must owe to some former importance, the traces of which have entirely passed away, its qualification of "town," for the squalid-looking row of houses, which, skirting for a little distance the great road from Paris to Brest, constitute St. Jouan de l'Isle at the present day, and may contain some six or eight hundred inhabitants at the utmost, do not certainly merit any higher rating than that of "village." It stands on a little eminence, at the foot of which, in an open valley, the infant Rance turns the machinery of some large paper-mills, which have been established there for making paper upon the English system. Upon a little island, which the river here forms, once stood, in those days when castles

were of more importance in the world than paper-mills, a feudal stronghold, from whose position the town took its surname "de l'Isle."

Instead of following any farther the course of the Rance, we turned towards the Méné hills, and condescended to make use of the high-road as far as Broons, where we intended to breakfast. This is a better town than its neighbour, though its situation among the hills can hardly be considered so favourable as the more sheltered position of St. Jouan, in the fertile valley of the Rance.

Broons is remarkable as having been the birth-place of Duguesclin. It was in the castle of La Motte-Broons, about a quarter of a league from the town, on the side of the high-road to Brest, that in the year 1320 was born the tenth child of the good knight, Robert Duguesclin and Jeanne de Malemains, Lady of Sacey, his wife. The child was of a hideousness so extraordinary, that, as the historians assure us, "l'amour maternel, tout ingenieux qu' il est à se tromper, ne put se faire illusion sur cet article." The old chronicler de Mesnard tells us that the infant was "plaisant ni de visage, ni de corsage, ayant le visage moult brun et le nez camus, et avec ce estoit rude de taille de corps, rude aussi en maintieng et en paroles."

Yet this was he the blaze of whose reputation was so soon to shine over the whole of Europe, whom high-born dames pined to see, and crowned heads loved to honour!

The remains of the castle have long since entirely perished, and an alley of trees only marks the area which was enclosed by the walls. A monument has been raised on the spot, by the general council of the department, to perpetuate the memory—not of the hero, for that were needless — but of the fact that on this spot he commenced his rarely-matched career.

Broons is a post-town, and its inn La Poste has somewhat of a more ambitious appearance that our last night's friend La Tête Noire. Yet we contented ourselves with ordering bread and butter, and eggs and milk, for breakfast. Whether it were that the morning air and our walk over the hills had given us a remarkably sharp-set appearance, or that the provision made for our breakfast was a fair specimen of the ordinary scale of feeding at Broons, I know not; but eighteen eggs and an immense soup-tureen full of boiled milk were placed on the table in answer to our demand. If there be any truth in the Horatian, " Suave est a magno tollere acervo," our breakfast must have been a delightful one.

We had observed that at Broons a new style of coiffure prevailed; and my companion wished to add a sketch of it to his fast-increasing collection of Breton costumes. With this view, we had begun making love to the maid a little, to induce her to do so much violence to her maiden modesty, as to sit to him for a few minutes, when a far better opportunity of achieving his object presented itself.

The landlady's daughter, a very pretty little girl, about fourteen years old, was going to be confirmed, and had just come down stairs to her mother, who was sitting knitting in the salle à manger, for inspection and approval before she started. Of course, upon such an occasion, the art of the "blanchisseuse" was taxed to the utmost, lace was not spared, and the most recherché coiffure was adopted, that the rigorous immutability of village mode would permit.

It should seem that the fickleness of fashion, which cannot possibly be altogether repressed, exercises in constant local variations, that mutability which is utterly denied to it in Britanny, with regard to time. Every district, almost every commune, has its own peculiar "mode," which changes not from generation to generation. As the mothers dress,

so do their daughters, so did their grandmothers, and so will their grand-daughters. If a woman of one parish marries or takes service, or, for any other cause, resides in another, she still retains the mode of her native village, and thus carries about her a mark, which is, to the strangers among whom she is a sojourner, an indication of the place whence she comes, and to herself a cherished souvenir of the home which she always continues to consider her own country.

But, though the form of the dress is invariable, and every inhabitant of the commune, from the wealthy farmer's wife to the poorest cottager, who earns her black bread by labour in the fields, would as soon think of adopting male attire as of innovating on the immemorial "mode du pays," yet the quality of the materials allows scope to wealth and taste, and female coquetry, to shew themselves. Thus the invariable "mode de Broons," with its trifling difference in form, which, in the eyes of the inhabitants, made it as different as light from darkness, from the "mode de St. Jouan," was equally observable in the dirty coarse linen coiffe of the maid, and the richly-laced and beautifully "got up" head-dress of the daughter of the house.

A very slight observation of human nature,

under a few only of its various phases, may suffice to show that that instinct of innocent coquctry, which prompts a woman to adorn her person to the best possible advantage, is not the hothouse growth of cities, but a genuine wildflower of nature. No highborn beauty ever more repeatedly or anxiously consulted her wax-lit Psyche on every faultless point of hair, face, neck, feet, and figure, before descending to the carriage for her first ball, than did our young Bretonne again and again recur to the mirror, which occupied the pier between the two windows of the salle à manger, before sallying forth on the great occasion of her confirmation.

The dear object of girlish ambition was the same to both; but the simplicity of the little "paysanne" showed itself in the utter absence of any wish to conceal her anxiety upon the subject. Though delighted with our compliments on her appearance, our presence by no means prevented her from springing upon a chair every other minute, to obtain a fuller view of the tout ensemble of her figure. Again and again the modest kerchief was arranged and rearranged, to show a hair's breadth more, or a hair's breadth less, of her brown but round and taper throat. Repeatedly, before it could be

finally adjusted to her satisfaction, was the delicate fabric of her coiffure moved with cautious care and dainty touch a *leetle* backwarder or a *leetle* forwarder over her sunburnt brow.

Many were the pokings and pinchings of frock and apron, the smoothings down before and twitchings behind of the not less anxious mother. Often did she retreat to estimate more correctly the general effect of the coup d'œil, and as often return to rectify some injudicious pin, or remodel some rebellious fold. When all was at length completed, and the well-pleased parent had received from the servants, whom she called in for the express purpose, the expected tribute of admiration, the little beauty took her "Imitation de la Vierge" in her hand, and tripped across to a convent of "sœurs grises" on the other side of the way, to receive their last instructions and admonitions respecting her religious duties, when she was presented to the bishop; while her mother screamed after her not to forget to pull up her frock out of the way when she knelt down.

All the time employed in this little revision of the toilet had not been left unimproved by my companion, who at the end of it produced and showed to the proud mother

an admirable full-length sketch of her pretty darling. The delighted astonishment of the poor woman, and her accent as she exclaimed "Oh! si c'etait pour moi!" and then blushed to the temples at what she had said, were irresistible; and the good-natured artist was fain to make her a present of the drawing. Her extreme delight and unbounded gratitude made me quite envy the power of conferring so much happiness so cheaply.

As he wished, before parting with the drawing he had made, to copy, as a memorial for himself, the form and colours of the costume, this occasioned us a few minutes more delay, which I employed in trying to learn some particulars of the route we ought to follow in order to reach Collinée, a little town in the midst of the hills, at which we proposed to sleep.

The people at the inn could tell me nothing about it; so I sallied out into the street, and addressed myself to a respectable-looking man, who was walking backwards and forwards underneath the little market-house of the town. He turned out to be no less a personage than the mayor of Broons; and when he had heard what I wanted, he good-naturedly asked me to come into the mansion-house, and wait till he should write me out å route,

as it was rather a difficult path to find. This he did, taking the trouble to specify, with much distinctness and at considerable length, the name of every hamlet and farm we were to pass by, and writing down the inquiries we were to make at certain points. It turned out to be a most intricate and pathless district, across which we should never have found our way as we did without a single blunder, had it not been for the kindness and cleverness of Monsieur le Maire de Broons.

On leaving the town, as we passed up the street, we saw a procession of the boys and girls, who were going to the church to receive confirmation. All the girls were dressed entirely in white, and with their pretty, uniform, laced coiffures and rosaries in their little hands, made a very gay-looking train. We observed our young acquaintance among them, certainly the prettiest and nearly the smartest of the number.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Walk to Collinée — Etang de Vieu Pré — Farm-house among the Hills—Spinning in Brittany—The "Méné" — General Features of the "Côtes du Nord" — Contrast between the Hill Country and the Low Grounds—View from the top of the Méné — A Village in the Hills—Its Church—Its "Buchon" — Hollow Ways—Collinée—Fair Day — Difficulty of finding Quarters — Bas Bretons—Business of the Fair — Hair Dealers—"Humours" of the Fair—An Injudiciously selected Resting-place.

From Broons we descended a steep hill, and, crossing a little stream, which rejoices in the pretty name of "Rosette," reached a farm called "Le Normandais." Beyond this we had nothing that could be called a road. But, by means of the good-natured mayor's written instructions, we found our way from farm to farm and from hamlet to hamlet, till we came to a remarkable tract of country called L'Etang de vieu Pré. This "etang" is a very considerable extent of perfectly flat low ground, which, I should think, must absolutely be a pond in winter. In summer, though in many parts the soil is so wet as

scarcely to bear them, a few cattle and sheep find a scanty subsistence. For, unlike most marshes, the pasture was far from being rich. The whole scene looked brown, barren, and desolate. Here and there the water still remained, and in one or two places the track which we were following crossed wide shallow pools by means of stepping-stones, and bundles of sticks, and sods of turf, by springing from one to another of which we contrived to cross the "Etang de vieu Pré" without being much the worse for it. The number of frogs which inhabit this marsh or pond is really wonderful. The whole air resounded with their hideous clamour, and every step we took was followed by some twenty or thirty splashes in the water, popping one after another in rapid succession, like the dropping shots of a brisk volley.

On the farther side of this large marsh, we no longer found any path at all over the wide moor, which ascended very rapidly from the edge of it. We shaped our course, however, without doubt or difficulty, by observing sundry landmarks — the corner of a wood here, and a stone-quarry there — which the provident instruction of our friend the mayor had pointed out. We continued for some time to ascend, and then crossed a wide and high

table-land, totally uncultivated, and covered with heather, but which, from traces of enclosures, which looked like the banks where hedges had once been, had an appearance of having been under cultivation at some former period.

A little farther on, we passed a wretched-looking farm, surrounded by a few old trees, and a small quantity of miserably poor fields. The house was the merest hovel, built of unhewn, unmortared stone, and covered with sods of turf, the only specimen of vegetation about the place that seemed to thrive.

A ragged and filthy, but still healthy-looking, woman sat before the door spinning. All the women spin the yarn from which the clothes of the cotter family are woven, and all use exclusively the old distaff, whose very trifling assistance leaves every individual twist of the wool to be performed by the fingers of the spinner.

How wonderful a thing it is to see, co-existent on the face of the earth, within the short space of about three hundred miles, two such processes, having each in view the same object, as that of the thousand-handed spinning machine of Yorkshire, and the tedious toil of the persevering creature I saw before me! How deep, into all the most im-

portant questions of human polity, and of the weal and woe of nations, would the consideration of the mighty contrast, and of the two states of society, of which these two modes of labour are the speaking exponents, plunge us!

At a little distance from the cottage was a tall, barefooted, and bare-legged girl, driving home a few cows, with which she had been rambling over the common in search of the least barren patches of pasture. She, too, had the same healthy, ruddy appearance as the mother; though, in all probability, their only food was a small quantity of black bread, made of sarazin, eked out with potatoes, and buttermilk from the churn, whose produce they could not afford to eat. But they had at least the nutriment of God's pure air on their own free hills, which, however, some well-fed philosophers may doubt the benefit of such meagre diet, many a labouring pair of lungs has panted for, and sickened for the want of, where, little as it seems, it was a boon too great to hope for.

After leaving this solitary farm, we again ascended, and soon found ourselves on the top of the ridge of the Méné hills. This is, in fact, an incorrect expression, since Méné, or more properly Méne, signifies, in Breton,

mountains; and the chain of hills, which runs through the whole length of Britanny, forming the backbone of its frame, is known under the various appellations of Menez-Bré, Menez-Aré, Menez-Dû, and Menez-Hom. The hill, which we were now on, is one of the most elevated of the Menez-Bré, whose average height, in the Côtes du Nord, is about a thousand feet. If this chain may be compared to the backbone of the country, the number of smaller elevations which diverge from it towards the northern coast may be likened to ribs. Indeed, such an image gives no bad idea of the general formation of the Côtes du Nord. The whole of the interior, comprising nearly half the extent of the department, is occupied by the higher range of hills. The remainder is divided into an innumerable quantity of rich and fertile valleys, by the lower hills, themselves cultivated, which seam the whole face of the country.

Nothing can be more essentially and strikingly different than these two districts. The latter is well cultivated and thickly peopled. Many of the farmers are wealthy, and a considerable degree of comfort prevails in most of the cottages of the labouring classes. In the hilly country, the exact reverse of this is the case. The land and its

inhabitants are wretchedly poor. The population is thin and scattered, and the system and practice of agriculture, contrary to what may usually be observed to happen, is as bad as the land is poor.

You no longer see a goodly array of flitches of bacon in the cottages of the peasants. Many of them do not even get the black bread of the sarazin. They make a sort of cake, called "galette," by pouring into a hot frying-pan a portion of a thin sort of gruel, made of sarazin meal. This assumes almost the consistency of leather, and is in appearance the nastiest food which can be conceived.*

The difference is as marked between the inhabitants themselves. It cannot be doubted that the people of these hills have been a separate tribe of the Breton race. On the coast, the men are, though not so tall as the Normans, generally of a fair average stature, well made, and healthy. The women have for the most part tolerably good figures and a fair proportion of beauty. In the hills, the men are small and weak, and the women almost invariably ugly. They are very subject to scrofulous affections, and the average duration of life is shorter than on the coast. I remarked that red hair is very frequent

among them. If the Celts of the lowlands in Britanny reminded me forcibly of the physiognomy of the Welch, those of the mountains bear much more resemblance to the Scottish highlanders.

We were much struck by the very marked difference in all that surrounded us in our journey through these hills, with what we had observed among the valleys which run down to the coast. Every thing seemed to follow the same scale of degraded proportions. The crops were stunted, and the breed of cattle entirely different from that of the more favoured lowlands. All the cattle in Britanny are rather small, but those of the hill country extremely so. They are like the little highland breed of Scotland, but, I think, are still smaller. The only exception that I remarked to this general diminutiveness of all the productions of nature, was the pigs. They have a hideous breed of enormous long-legged, ferocious-looking animals, whose high-arched, sharp backbone, long, lean, hollow sides, and red hungry eyes, are the very personification of poverty and famine. I have seen together in these hills a bull and a hog, of which I am sure that the latter was the tallest.

The culminating point of the hill we were now crossing was marked by a huge mass of

the rock, which had here thrust itself through the thin covering of sod. The sun was hot above our heads, and we had been for some time past toiling over the vast heathery "lande" which surrounded us on all sides, without the relief of a moment's shade from any single tree in all the dreary waste. We were not sorry, therefore, to rest awhile under the shadow of these rocks, and, with map in hand, enjoy the prospect of the very large extent of country we could descry beneath us.

Far away to the north stretched the broad valley, watered by my old acquaintance, the Arquenon, which rises in the hills not far from Collinée. Eastward, the heights of Becherel, on the frontier of Ille et Vilaine, were still in sight; and farther still to the south, after wandering over the greater part of the canton of Merdignac and the low grounds, watered by the Livet, the eye rested on the lower hills around la Trinité, on the other side of the frontier of Morbihan. To the west nothing was to be seen but the barren extent of land immediately before us, which we were about to traverse.

Our brief rest would have been more grateful if we could have found wherewithal to quench our thirst, or even moisten our lips. But the greedy sun had licked up every drop

of moisture which the rain had left in little pools in the hollows of the rock; leaving a dry coat of earthy sediment at the bottom, which told plainly how many years must have elapsed, and how many thousand times the rain must have filled, and the sun absorbed that little pool, before the casual atoms, which the wind had brought and left upon the dry rock, could have amounted to such a mass.

We could not find even a drop sufficient for my companion to colour the sketches he had been making of the distant villages of Rouillac and Langourla, whose spires were visible from the seat we had chosen in different directions.

Our thirst induced us to quit our rocky seats, and once more brave the unmitigated noontide sun in crossing the remainder of the wide lande, sooner, perhaps, than we should otherwise have had the courage to do. But when it was at length passed, and another three quarters of an hour had brought us to St. Joseph, which our "route" taught us to expect somewhere hereabouts, our perseverance seemed likely to meet with no very encouraging reward. The hamlet of St. Joseph consisted of some half dozen miserable cottages, and a small chapel, which scarcely

differed from them in appearance except in being surmounted with a little cross instead of a chimney.

I have rarely seen a place of worship so humble in appearance, or so desolate in position, as this little chapel of St. Joseph. And the cottage of the poor priest who serves it is an appendage altogether in character with it.

> "All unembower'd
> And naked stands that lowly parsonage;"

and the life of its inmate can hardly be more luxurious or more refined than that of his fellow cottagers, who form his flock.

I could not help thinking, as I marked the utter poverty of the little hamlet and its chapel, that it afforded a striking illustration of the spirit and operations of the Catholic church establishment, as observable either in our own or in the Roman branch of it. How admirably calculated is its parochial arrangement to pervade the whole body of society, to penetrate, with its ennobling and restraining influences, the congregated masses of crowded cities, and to follow, "with healing on its wings," with words of consolation and lessons of bright hopes, the objects of its maternal care, into the smallest ramifications and most secluded recesses of civil life!

Truly may our apostolic establishment be termed the poor man's church.

One of the poverty-stricken hovels of the half-dozen which composed the hamlet exhibited over its door the bush, which is the invariable indication of the village "buchon." It almost always in Britanny consists of a bunch of misletoe, with very frequently a bottle suspended in the midst of it.

The place of entertainment which this guided us to, was by far the most wretched and filthy dwelling—always excepting the frightful dens of some of the Manchester operatives—I had ever seen. The only light was given from the door and the wide chimney. There had been a small window; but it was entirely blocked up with filth and the various means adopted to patch the broken glass. The whole of the dwelling consisted of one chamber, which was crowded with a variety of rude and old-looking furniture. A good fire was blazing on a hearth, formed of a huge unhewn stone, which rose some eight or ten inches above the level of the rest of the earthen floor. Two nearly naked children were sprawling on the earth in front of this, and close to them, scratching and throwing the dirt all over them, were three or four fowls seeking their food among the quantity

of filth and rubbish of all kinds which loaded the floor of the whole apartment.

The wretched bed was supported on one side of the fire on an open bedstead, a mark of the last degree of poverty in Britanny. A rude table and a couple of benches occupied nearly half the remainder of the space, and on the opposite side, in the midst of all this filth and misery, there was, begrimed with dirt and sadly rotted in the lower part, a carved oak press, which in its better days would have been worthy of a conspicuous place in the shop of Messrs. Town and Emanuel.

That part of the room opposite to the fire below the door was occupied by the entire stock in trade of the aubergiste, consisting of three huge butts of cider, one of which was in tap. Underneath the cock, the earthen floor, within a circle of two feet diameter, had been converted into a deep pool of mud by the dripping from the ill-fitted wooden spigot.

About half a dozen peasant men and women were enjoying their mid-day cessation from labour in this delightful place of repose. There was literally scarcely room to enter, none at all to sit down. We pushed in, however, and, having no means of knowing which was the master or mistress of the house, for

all the assembly stared in speechless astonishment and no one moved, demanded cider without addressing any body specifically. For a minute or two not the smallest notice was taken of the request; but at the end of that time a sulky, ill-looking, horribly filthy woman got up from the bed, on which she had been sitting, and, filling a tin measure, handed it to us without speaking.

No degree of thirst, short of that which endangers life, could have induced us to swallow a mouthful of the execrable beverage, which tasted like the mixture of a small quantity of vinegar with stagnant and nearly putrid water. I observed one of the old women, who was resolutely persevering in swallowing mouthful by mouthful her little pipkin of it, making awful faces at every fresh gulp. We laid down our sous on the barrel, gave the disagreeable landlady a silent nod, and made our escape.

The remainder of our walk to Collinée was principally through some of the very deep hollow lanes which are so characteristic a feature of many parts of Britanny. Some of these are, occasionally, at least twenty feet deep below the level of the adjoining fields. I should think that in winter they must frequently be altogether impassable, and even in

May we found large pools of water lying in them every here and there.

By the time we arrived at Collinée, we were really tired, and in considerable want of both meat and drink. But neither here did it seem by any means a matter of course that our wants would be supplied. Collinée, though a "chef lieu de canton," is but a village, and, like all the towns and villages of the hill part of the country, a very poor one. And on the present occasion it was in far too great bustle to pay any attention to us, and the calls upon its resources, always limited enough, were already much more numerous than could be satisfied. In short, we soon perceived that it was fair-day here also; and we afterwards discovered that Collinée boasts one of the largest cattle-fairs in this part of the department.

It appeared for a long time as if we really should have been unable to procure any quarters whatever for the night. The first auberge we applied to, and apparently the principal one in the town, was literally so full, that we entered with great difficulty. The whole of the ground-floor of the house was as closely crowded as the space in front of the pit-door of one of our theatres on the benefit-night of a popular actor. As some, by pulling

and pushing, extricated themselves from the press, and oozed out at the door, others pushed forward to occupy the vacated space, and make their way, if possible, to the bar inside.

When, after long and persevering struggling through the not too fragrant crowd, we at length reached the labouring landlord, he told us at once that it was quite useless to talk to him about beds or dinner, for that the house was already fuller than it could hold, and he had got more to do than he could accomplish already.

Our second attempt at another house was met by the same reply; and we were disconsolately making our way up the crowded street, very much puzzled to know what to do next, when a gend'arme demanded our passports. When he had read them, he asked, as usual, at what inn we were; and this produced the story of our woes. Whereupon the benevolent soldier, remarking "Il faut vous trouver un lit, quelque part," returned with us to the second house we had tried, and, with some little trouble and a great deal of talking, persuaded the landlord to assign us a little room in which there was one bed, and to promise to bring us some food as soon as possible.

We were overjoyed at a degree of good fortune of which we had begun to despair; and, having once secured a shelter for the night, were quite disposed to let the rest take its chance, and deemed ourselves lucky in having an opportunity of seeing the fair. Our little room looked out upon the busy street, and we were at no loss for amusement, till our host, as good as his word, brought a plate of stewed meat of some sort, a lump of bread, and a decanter of cider, which he deposited on the one chair, which, with the bed, was all the furniture our room supplied. He made many apologies, but said, that at a time like that, all deficiencies ought to be excused; and finally he pointed to the key in the door. observing, that we might as well turn it if we wished to keep the room to ourselves. We made a hasty meal, and then, following the landlord's advice, and pocketing the key, we pushed our way out through the crowd below, and prepared to enjoy the fair as well as the best of them.

And certainly the scene, which we now found ourselves at leisure to observe a little more attentively than before, was far from deficient in novelty or amusement.

The grand business of the day was selling and buying cattle; and a great number of

the shaggy wild-looking little bullocks and cows of the hill district were assembled, together with a small sprinkling of the larger lowland race. But, numerous as they were, these had none of them been driven to the fair in large droves, as one has been accustomed to see in other countries. But each little farmer had come with his one, two, or perhaps three, head of beasts.

And then, the figures of these men! Any thing so strange, so wild, so picturesque, so unlike all that English eyes are accustomed to look upon, can hardly be conceived. These were the first Bas-Brètons we had seen, and my companion was wild to make drawings of every figure we met. With their immense black hats, their long streaming hair, and quaint square cut coats, they looked more like men belonging to some forgotten century than aught that could be living in the present age. They were dressed almost invariably in cloth of a reddish brown, something between a claret and chocolate colour.

Business of all sorts was going on briskly. Here, a restive little cow, with its owner, holding tight a short rope attached to its horns, would push the crowd right and left in their progress through the street at a good round trot, the result of the cow's strong

desire to run away at a gallop, and her masters equally strong wish to proceed at a sober walk. There a woman was beating a drum, to call the attention of the public to a large collection of human teeth, which her husband, the doctor, professed to have extracted with the utmost skill, an operation which he was again ready to perform for those who needed it for the consideration of one sous. In another place, an itinerant haberdasher, with his whole stock of tapes, bobbins, etc., tied to the end of a long pole, from which they depended in many a tempting festoon and long streamer, held his wares high above the heads of the gaping crowd, whom his eloquence, Autolycus-like, had collected round him; nor did he lower his rod, so that the eager hand of the purchaser might reach and select the desired article, and pull it from its moorings to the bunch above, till he had fairly secured the customer's sous beforehand. There were plenty of quack-doctors offering remedies for every ill that can afflict man or beast, and several vendors of crucifixes, rosaries, little waxen saints and virgins, and similar trumpery.

But what surprised me more than all by the singularity and novelty of the thing, were the operations of the dealers in hair.



In various parts of the motley crowd there were three or four different purchasers of this commodity, who travel the country for the purpose of attending the fairs, and buying the tresses of the peasant girls. They have particularly fine hair, and frequently in the greatest abundance. I should have thought that female vanity would have effectually prevented such a traffic as this being carried on to any extent. But there seemed to be no difficulty in finding possessors of beautiful heads of hair perfectly willing to sell. We saw several girls sheared one after the other like sheep, and as many more standing ready for the shears, with their caps in their hands, and their long hair combed out and hanging down to their waists. Some of the operators were men and some women. By the side of the dealer was placed a large basket, into which every successive crop of hair, tied up into a whisp by itself, was thrown. No doubt, the reason of this indifference to their tresses on the part of the fair Bretonnes, is to be found in the invariable "mode" which covers every head, from childhood upwards, with close caps, which entirely prevent any part of the hair from being seen, and of course as totally conceal the want of it.

But at least, thought I, it is a comfort to find that these poor girls possess, and can turn into money, an article which must be worth a sum of considerable importance to them. I inquired, and learnt afterwards, the terms upon which a girl submits her head to the shears; and how much does the reader guess is the price thus secured as a little dowry? The highest value given by these abominable hair-merchants is twenty sous, and the more usual consideration by far is a gaudy, but trumpery, cotton handkerchief, worth about twelve or sixteen sous, of which these gentry carry about with them a stock for the purpose. The profit thus netted by these hair-mongers, during a tour through the country, must be enormous.

As in similar scenes elsewhere, so in Britanny also, as the business of the fair grew slack, the fun grew thick; and, as this fun consisted almost entirely in drinking, the whole village became, as night drew in, one motley scene of noise and confusion. Preparations, both for eating and drinking, were by no means confined to the houses. Numerous fires, showing themselves and the figures of those around them with most picturesque effect in the rapidly increasing darkness, might be seen along the sides of the streets,

with each its presiding deity, in the shape of an old crone, preparing some savoury, richly steaming dainty. The cooking apparatus was a very simple one — merely a large circular iron plate, some twenty inches in diameter, supported over the fire on four legs. On this were placed the various tempting morsels—a few sausages, or a scrap of bacon, or, perhaps, even a choice atom of "jambon" —which first seduced the passers by, themselves, and then leading, like all temptations yielded to, from one to another, served as " shoeing-horns to draw on a pot of" cider.

This favourite beverage was found at every turn. Innumerable hogsheads, each on the tap in the little cart that brought it, were sold out to the last drop by their proprietors, and the quantity consumed must have been prodigious.

In the houses, the more expensive luxuries of bottled beer, café noir, and brandy, were not spared. Both within and without, as more and more by degrees the liquor got uppermost, the babel roar of tongues became tremendous. Several gend'armes were patrolling the village continually; but, though the most vehement abuse and most energetic scolding were abundant, no blows were struck, the contending parties, in every instance that I wit-

nessed, confining their warfare most scrupulously to taunts, invectives, and the most frantic gesticulations.

As we were taking our last turn through the village, then, at length, beginning to be a little less crowded, we saw a scene at which I could not help laughing heartily. A very old man—eighty at least—dressed in the most bizarre extremity of the Collinée fashion, was so very drunk, that he obstreperously refused to be led home. He was bent on sitting down in the street, which, perhaps, would not have been so bad a motion, had it not been that no seat would serve his turn, but the round iron frying-plate of one of the al fresco restaurants. The agony of the old woman, at the threatened destruction about to come upon her cates and dainties, the imminent, and yet most ludicrous danger to the absurb old fool himself if he succeeded in accomplishing his project, and his drunken remonstrances against her unkindness in opposing it, were most comical. Twice she energetically attacked the threatening portion of his person with the fork with which she was superintending her cooking, and as often he, with great and determined seriousness of aspect, repeated the attempt; nor would he have failed finally to accomplish it, had he not

been dragged away by his son by main force.

The crowd was rapidly dispersing in various manners, as they could, when we returned to our room. The house was still too full for us to hope for any attention. So, without troubling any body, we made our way upstairs, and, locking ourselves into our room, we divided the bedclothes of the one bed between us, and lay down without undressing, tired enough to be sure of a good night's rest, despite all discomforts, and the hubbub still going on below.

CHAPTER XIX.

Departure from Collinée — Views from the Méné Hills — Breton Children—We are suspected of Witchcraft—Loudeac—Hours of Eating in Britanny—School—Violation of the Grave—Theatre—Village Churchyard—Extraordinary Custom—Superstition.

We rose from our lair at break of day, the next morning, and, going down stairs, found every thing there betokening the morning after a long and late debauch. All was disorder and stench. We hastily paid the eight sous demanded for our yesterday's meal, and departed.

In the more remote parts of the country, we never found any charge made for beds. Our accommodation at Collinée certainly were not worth any very large sum; but I have slept in many an excellent bed, without any charge being made, or the least expectation, on the part of the hostess, of receiving any thing. Sometimes, in inns of rather superior pretensions, it was hinted that if we

liked our beds, "la bonne" would be grateful for any small mark of our approbation.

At a short distance from the town, we found a clear, rapid, little rill, perhaps the Arquenon itself, newly sprung from its source, which, at any rate, could not have been far distant, or else some streamlet bearing to the infant potentate his first offering of tributary waters. Here we made our morning ablutions, as best we might, with at least plenty of water, clear and fresh, and a sweet atmosphere around us.

After passing this brook, we soon came again upon the moors, "landes," as the French term them, and began to ascend one of the highest hills of the chain. The country was of a precisely similar description to that we passed over on the other side of Collinée, and the same remarks may be applied to it. The view also, when we topped the hill, was though, of course, in some respects different, still similar in kind, and marked by the same general character.

It was, however, less of a panorama than that from the rocks near St. Joseph, the hills closing in upon us more as we advanced farther among them, and confining the view of the lower country to partial pictures seen here and there between their openings. From

the top of the hill we were now crossing, the principal view was to the south.

We passed, near the summit, the little village of St. Gilles-du-Méné, a knot of the miserable hill cottages; and then, crossing a wide and high table-land, on which were some more numerous herds of cattle than we had before observed, descended into the valley, and reached the large village of Plemet in time for breakfast.

In the fields near the village we observed in several instances ploughing done with four oxen, two horses, and three men, one holding the plough, and two driving the cattle. Nevertheless, the ground did not appear to be particularly heavy soil, but rather the reverse. From Plemet we walked on after breakfast to Loudeac.

Our road first crossed the Lié, a clear, swift stream, which looks as if it must contain trout, and then once again conducted us over a high ridge of moor. From the top of this we had a very fine view of the valley of the Lié, which we could trace many a mile to the south beyond La Cheye, and we looked down upon Loudeac much nearer below us to the west.

As we stood looking at the more extensive view, and endeavouring to count the different

distances presented by the windings of the valley, two ragged children, about twelve and fourteen years old, with the picturesque large round hats universal in this part of the country, made their appearance from the other side of a high bank immediately in front of us, and, together with a young kid, which they were playing with, sat themselves down on the top of it.

"That is just all I wanted to make a foreground!" exclaimed my companion. "There are all the materials of a picture—a very picturesque group for a foreground, and a most lovely distance."

So saying, he called out to the boys to remain as they were for a few minutes, promising to give them five sous for their pains, and began to prepare his sketching-tackle. At first they took no other notice of him or his proposition than by staring at us with every appearance of the utmost astonishment. But as soon as ever he had sat down with pencil in hand and book on knees, and they comprehended at length what it was he was going to do, the biggest raised a tremendous cry, scrambled down the other side of the bank with precipitate speed, and disappeared with the kid after him. The other child, thus left alone, stirred not from the position which

he was in, except to crouch a little nearer to the earth. He began sobbing bitterly, and endeavoured to hide himself as much as possible behind his huge round hat; from beneath the brim of which we could nevertheless see his bright black eye glancing out at us with an expression of the most painful anxiety.

Leaving my companion with the sketch-book prepared for operations still open upon his knees, I advanced to the poor little fellow, and soon perceived that he was in an agony of fear. He was trembling through every fibre in his body, and cowering to the earth with an expression both of limb and feature that eloquently spoke the extremity of his terror. The other boy was close below, but, when he caught my eye looking over the bank, he ran off, crouching to the ground as much as he could, and availing himself of every tuft of heather that could conceal him for a moment, till he reached another bank, behind which he took refuge.

It was with difficulty that I could get any answer from the little trembler, who retained his place, to my inquiries what ailed him, and my assurances that no harm was going to happen to him. My offers of money, which I thought would have made us friends imme-

diately, were utterly rejected, with a drawing back of the little hand almost spasmodic, when I stretched out the coin towards it. At length, with some difficulty, I gathered from his broken answers to my reiterated questionings, the explanation of his unaccountable panic. We were bewitching him. I called to my companion to come and shew him the nature of his intentions, and let him see the other figures in his book ; but the instant he arose for the purpose of doing so, the little fellow jumped up, and ran off with all his might after his brother I have not the least doubt that, as long as the artist's eye was upon him, he had believed himself fascinated, and fancied that he could not move.

I learnt afterwards that it was a common superstition that, if any body draws a likeness of another, and carries it away with him, he holds, at any distance of time or place, an unlimited power over the original, whose death he may cause at any time by the destruction of the portrait.

So we were obliged to pursue our way to Loudeac without succeeding in our very innocent intention.

This little town is the capital of one of the five arrondissements which compose the department, and as such the seat of a sous-pre-

fecture. Though it has no particular attractions, and it was still early, yet, as we had had two or three fatiguing journeys, and had that morning already walked no contemptible distance over the hills, we determined to rest there the remainder of the day.

We found the party at the inn, a company of some twelve or fourteen, consisting principally of "pensionairs" living in the town, together with two or three "commis-voyageurs"—anglicé bagmen — and the host and hostess about to sit down to dinner at twelve o'clock.

There are two modes of living prevalent in Britanny, at the hotels as well as, I believe, in the private houses. In the larger and more advanced towns the table d'hôte is spread at ten and at five. The repast is much the same at either hour ; but the first is called breakfast, and the second dinner. In the smaller and more remote towns, and in the villages, the hours of eating are twelve and eight. Either meal is much like the breakfasts and dinners of the large towns ; but they are termed, the first dinner, and the second supper. So true it is that the late breakfast and dinners of our days are gradually coming round to the habits of our great grandfathers.

At Loudeac the old mode was preserved. But, as we happened to have made an excellent breakfast at nine, it did not altogether suit us to dine at twelve. So, when we had secured our beds, and stated our intention of supping at eight o'clock, we drank a couple of bottles of beer, and vacated the salle à manger.

It seemed, however, that we were likely to be somewhat puzzled how to dispose of the hours before us; for all the amusement which the little town of Loudeac could furnish was exhausted at the end of the first two. We visited the church, a large, modern, hideously ugly structure, of handsome well-cut stone, of which the inhabitants are very proud, and then lounged into the large and airy "ecole de deuxième classe," where the boys of the town are taught reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, and surveying; and where we saw, as a motto over the door: "Une place pour chaque chose, et chaque chose à sa place." The boys were gone to dinner; but a master, who spoke to us intelligently enough of his own school, but seemed profoundly ignorant of all beyond it and its routine of instruction, remained, still striving to initiate into the mysteries of calligraphy two restive or stupid louts, who, with eyes turned towards the door, and thoughts any where but where their

bodies were, seemed not likely to profit much by his endeavours.

I could not help thinking, as I looked in the man's weary face and anxious eye, while he hopelessly strove to produce a degree of proficiency which would — it was easy to see how unjustly — be considered as the test of his own exertions, of a passage in that precious morsel of autobiography, which Scott has left behind him, in which he speaks of the "fortunate vanity, which alone could induce a man, who has arms to pare and burn a muir, to submit to the yet more toilsome task of cultivating youth."

Leaving the painful process still in operation, we wandered on to a little miniature promenade, in the outskirts of the town, which conducted us to the cemetery, where I was astonished and shocked to see the ground broken in every direction for the purpose of extracting the coffins, quantities of which we saw broken up, and stacked in the churchyard, for burning. From the condition of the wood it was evident, that this violation of the grave must have been committed long before the decomposition of the bodies.

Retreating quickly from this ghastly scene — for such it truly was — we returned into the town, and saw in the "place" a large

temporary sort of barn, on one end of which was an enormous placard, which set forth that Monsieur Robert would have the honour to present to the inhabitants of Loudeac, in his theatre, "Le dernier jugement, et la resurrection, le vie et la mort de notre seigneur I. C., l'histoire de Genevieve de Brabant, et d'*autres chose* pris de l'ecriture saint; tout avec automates de trois pieds de hauteur magnifiquement costumées." I should have liked much to see this representation, but was told, on inquiry, that the theatre was open only on Sundays.

We had now wandered all round the town and through every street of it, and exhausted all it had to shew, and it was only half-past two o'clock. "Time travels in divers paces with divers persons," as the saucy Rosalind says. And verily those who, in journeying, are tempted to stay a day at a country town, are notable instances of those whom time creeps withal.

There was nothing for it but to take a stroll at hazard, and trust to chance for finding some matter of amusement or speculation. I like no better than Sterne the man who can walk from Dan to Beersheba, and find all barren; but it must be confessed that the country around Loudeac, if not absolutely

barren, is singularly uninteresting. Nevertheless, our stroll was not altogether fruitless, since it threw in our way a scene so striking, so strange, and so eminently characteristic, that the adjoining plate was one of the subjects I selected for publication, from among a great number of drawings which my companion brought home with him.

Our objectless ramble brought us to a secluded little churchyard, in which we saw, for the first time, one of those strangely furnished "chapelles des morts," which we afterwards found to be common in lower Britanny. These extraordinary places consist of a small low stone building, without any door or window, unless a large aperture, running along the whole length of the building, and generally divided into several compartments by stone pillars, be so called. Inside this edifice, which is sometimes erected against the wall of the church, but is oftener a separate building, in a part of the churchyard near the entrance, are congregated a vast heap of mouldering bones, the accumulation of ages. But, in the space formed by the aperture above mentioned, and on a variety of ledges and brackets about the exterior of the building, are seen a quantity of little boxes, each with its pointed roof, surmounted with a cross, and

each containing, grinning on the spectator through an opening in the front, made on purpose, a human skull. Each, too, bears a legend, which points out to every villager which among the ghastly company of hideous skeletons once wore his honoured father's grey hairs; which once was clothed with the oft-caressed cheeks of his lost wife; and from which eyeless sockets shone forth upon him, in former days, the love and tenderness of a mother. Yes, there are the dead — the lost ones! each with the scroll that individualizes the solemn lesson — "Ici git le chef de . . . . . decedé . . etc. "Priez Dieu pour lui."

How wedded to the luxury of woe must these people be! Their religious feelings, their superstitions, habits, and thoughts, are all deeply tinged with gloom; nor is any circumstance or observance omitted, or any opportunity lost, by a Breton, which may bring to his mind the sombre images of decay and death. Great would be deemed the crime of that man or woman who should pass the churchyard where a relative has been buried within the year, without giving a few minutes to prayer upon their grave.

In the churchyard which we now entered, there were two figures engaged in this duty to the dead. Both seemed deeply earnest in

their prayer; but the man shortly rose from his knees, and, after a last look at the grave, turned himself towards the lofty crucifix, which is almost always a prominent object in the churchyards, crossed himself, and passed on his way.

But the woman remained kneeling a very long time, more I should think than half an hour; and, when at length she, too, rose and departed, we perceived, by the inscription on the little wooden cross at the grave-head, that it was the resting-place of a female child of sixteen. It was then, doubtless, a mother whose intercessions for her child we had witnessed.

And, indeed, when one considers the awful creed so sedulously inculcated on the simple minds of these poor people, it is more to be wondered at that the intercessions of a fond mother should ever cease than that much time should be devoted to them. Her lost treasure, the child, whose welfare during life she would have purchased gladly by any amount of self-sacrifice, is suffering the agonizing pangs of purgatorial fire; and on her depends the duration of its torment!—her prayers are the means by which its pains may be abridged!

Deeply impressed by the scene we had witnessed, and meditating on these and various



[illegible]awn and Etched by A. [illegible]

PEASANT IN PRAYER AT THE GRAV[illegible] FRIE[illegible]

others of the results of that invention of the Roman church—perhaps the most dangerous and utterly unscriptural of all its errors—purgatory, we pursued our way back to Loudeac, in a somewhat more sombre frame of mind than that in which we had started for our walk.

CHAPTER XX.

Fast-Day in Britanny—Soupe Maigre — Sociable Juge de Pays — Arrondissement of Loudeac — Weaving in Britanny — Efforts of Government to Improve the Country—Moral Improvement wanted —Favourable Circumstance—Inefficiency of the Church in Britanny—Anecdote—Walk to La Chèze—View of the Town—The Castle — Walk to Rohan — Abandoned Farm — Rohan — The Castle — The Duc de Rohan — Old Woman's Reminiscences of the English.

When we reached Loudeac it still wanted some time to the supper hour; and, besides the absence of amusement or occupation, we began to be impatient for its approach upon other grounds. The twelve o'clock dinner and eight o'clock supper, however consoling might be their approach to fashionable hours, we found on this as well as on many other occasions to be extremely inconvenient. The one was as much too late for dinner, as the other was too early. And, as for making the twelve o'clock dispensation of soupe maigre, fish, and regout'd grease, a breakfast, and renouncing café-au-lait and bread and butter

and eggs — it was a measure not to be thought of.

"Time and the hour," however, "wear through the longest day." But when, after an exertion of patience perfectly heroical, and a stoical endurance of the pangs of hunger, we at last found ourselves seated at table in company with the same party, whom we had left in possession of the salle à manger in the morning, we discovered that it was Friday, and that keeping fast is by no means obsolete in "La bonne vielle Bretagne."

The first dish was, of course, the universal potage; and I was rather curious to see what "tour de force" the cook would resort to, to reduce to Friday "maigre"-ness that, which on high days and holydays consisted of warm water, sopped bread, and a sparing allowance of cabbage-leaves. But when I tasted the production, I perceived no difference. The warm water, the bread, the cabbage, even the salt, had all been supplied in the usual proportions; but I was assured that I might partake of it with a safe conscience, for that the portion of meat which they make a point of always passing through the water on other days, was carefully kept from any contact with the Friday's portion.

Four kinds of fish, dressed in a variety of

different ways, a large platter of boiled eggs, and various concoctions of potatoes, and an immense rice-pudding, were then placed upon the table; among which I found—fast-day as it was—amply sufficient to make a very good dinner, without having recourse to a little lump of roast veal, which sneaked in among the other dishes as a provision for obstinate heretics and sinners. This little compromise between his religion and his interest was winked at by mine host for the sake of the custom of the "commercial gentlemen," who, coming from parts of France, where, unfortunately, the same decree of religious feeling and observance as is found in Britanny does not prevail, might not choose to patronize a landlord whose conscience was too tender to connive at their carnivorous heresies.

When supper was over, we ordered coffee; and as a "juge de pays," who was among the company, was the only one who followed our example, we were left alone with him, when the rest of the company had dispersed. An inquiry on our part, whether the smoke of a cigar would be disagreeable to him, answered on his, by the avowal that he was a smoker himself, and, followed by the tender and acceptance of a cigar, served as an introduction to the great man, and the opening of

a conversation, in which we learned some particulars of the products and resources of the district we were in.

He admitted that the arrondissement of Loudeac was by far the most backward part of the department. It is composed almost entirely of the poor upland country, and poverty, as well as remoteness of position, have caused it to lag behind even the very slow march of improvement, perceptible in many other parts of Britanny. Arthur Young, when he visited this part of France, in 1776, in the course of his agricultural tours, found half the land unproductive. But our friend, the "juge," thought that a fifth only, or not much more, was so at the present day. I have reason to think, however, that his estimate was too favourable.

The ancient triennial system of culture and fallows is universal. Rye, sarrasin, oats, fallow, is the almost invariable course. Within the last thirty years, the cultivation of the potato has been introduced; and it has already become a very considerable article of food among the labouring classes.

Of the whole superfices of the arrondissement, valued at 147,950 hectares of land, 39,000 only are estimated as bearing corn-crops; and one thousand as devoted to potatoes.

A good many cattle are bred and fattened in the arrondissement; but the race is in great need of being improved; and the government have determined to attain this object, by gratuitously placing bulls of a good breed at certain stations throughout the district. But even where the proposed benefit is conferred gratuitously, and the improvement aimed at is clear, evident, and undeniable, innovation on their established practices and opinions is so distasteful to this remarkable people, that it is with great difficulty that any progress in improvement is made.

It is calculated that a fifteenth of the superfices of the soil is wood-land; and the trees best adapted to its nature are the oak, ash, chesnut, and more especially birch.

Notwithstanding the nature of the country, and its present wretched appearance, it has within it many of the sources of wealth and prosperity.

Iron is found in abundance in many parts of the arrondissement, and there are several smelting-houses and forges, especially those of Vautblanc in the commune of Plemet, les Salles in that of Perret, and le Haut Fourneau de la Hardouinais in that of St. Launeuc. Granite also of very good quality abounds, but is not worked; and there are slate-

quarries, said to afford excellent slate, but destroyed by being ignorantly quarried.

Formerly this district possessed an extensive manufacture and commerce in linen clothes, of which Loudeac was the centre and principal depôt. From this town and that of Uzel, in the western part of the arrondissement, six million pieces of cloth were, previously to the Revolution, exported annually to Cadiz, whence they were sent to South America. This branch of industry has, however, of late years been gradually and almost entirely crushed by the improvements and wonderful increase of the cotton manufacture, with which the poor and ignorant weavers of Britanny have been totally unable to compete.

The trade is now confined to a few exportations direct to Mexico, the internal consumption, and a small traffic carried on in some parts of France, especially in the south, and among the Pyrenees, by Breton pedlars, who, with untiring industry, and for small profit, seek that distant market for the productions of their country.

In the year 1825 there were in the arrondissement of Loudeac about four thousand weavers, who produced annually two million ells of cloth, of the average value of two

francs an ell. No other process was known in the manufacture than that of the old shuttle; and the average amount that the weaver could earn at this labour might be estimated at eighty or ninety centimes. Of the bleached cloths, two-thirds were used for exportation to South America, and the remaining third to home consumption. The unbleached cloths pass entirely from the hand of the weaver to that of the consumer, without passing through those of any third party. In many instances, the weaver receives the yarn from the peasant by whose family it has been spun, and for whose clothing it is intended, and is paid a stipulated sum for converting it into cloth.

The majority of the four thousand weavers, who existed in 1825, were not wholly employed upon this labour, but resorted to it only during the period of leisure from agricultural employment. It was estimated that fifteen hundred were exclusively weavers; that a similar number laboured at the loom for six, and one thousand for three, months only, in the year.

Since the period to which these documents refer, a still further decrease has constantly and rapidly been taking place.

That this ancient manufacture must perish

utterly and for ever before the encroachments of cotton is evident and inevitable. Nor can Britanny ever become again, even to the extent it has formerly been, a manufacturing country. The want of coal, which has never been found, and probably does not exist in the province, must for ever preclude the possibility of this. Many other circumstances of the country unite in pointing out agricultural wealth and prosperity as the true object of its ambition.

There is very much, however, still to be done before Britanny can be considered on a level in this respect with many other parts of France, themselves far from being much advanced. The government seem to be well aware of this; and it is impossible to travel through any part of the country without being struck with the great efforts which are made to improve the physical well-being of the people. In every direction new roads are laid down, and new bridges built; quays are constructed, and ports improved. Societies for the encouragement and promotion of agricultural science and improvement are founded and prizes established.

These efforts will do much; but they will not by themselves avail to elevate the province from the state of semi-barbarism in

which it has so long remained stationary, while the rest of the world has been progressing. The moral and intellectual condition of the people must be improved. The inveterate habits of drunkenness, which are the scourge of the country, and an effectual bar to all real improvement, as they are the invariable concomitants and natural consequence of brutish ignorance, must be vanquished. The people themselves must co-operate in the work of their own civilization; and, above all, the church must be true to her mission; and be again, as has ever been the case when she has duly fulfilled it, the main agent of all real progress in improvement, and of every true amelioration in the lot of man.

There is much in the character and circumstances of the Bretons, which might be turned to good account in the work of civilization. They have many good qualities, which seem indigenous in the race; and, above all, the principles and foundation of religion have not yet, as in almost every other part of France, been sapped and destroyed in the minds of the people. The principle of Faith, though awfully abused and misapplied, is still vigorous; and those who have seen how almost hopeless is the task of enlightening or

improving the heart in which it has perished, will readily appreciate the importance of this point in their character.

But, alas! little is to be hoped from a priesthood constituted as that of Britanny is for the most part at present. What can be expected from a body of men barely less ignorant than those they ought to teach; very little more elevated in station, birth, tastes, or manners, than their rude flocks, and, worse than all, who too often feel that their interest is concerned in maintaining rather than in removing their ignorance! They are, indeed, blind leaders of the blind; and, as long as the priesthood remains in the degraded condition in which, for the most part, it exists in Britanny, little of real advancement, it may be feared, will be apparent among the mass of the people.

Of course, the physical improvements which the government are so zealously and so laudably engaged in, will tend in some degree to enlighten the minds as well as benefit the condition of the peasants. One very curious instance was stated to me, in which the opening of a road had, not by any indirect or intermediate process, but simply by its own positive effects, checked to a very great extent the prevailing vice of the people—drunkenness, in

a particular district. The adjoining communes of Plemet, Laurenan, and Gomené, were perfectly inaccessible by carts, and at the same time so abundantly productive of apples, that more cider was made there than could possibly be drank by the inhabitants. It could not be sold, for there were no means of transporting it. It was, therefore, drunk perfectly ad libitum, by every man, woman, and child, in those parishes; and the result, as may be easily supposed, was that drunkenness prevailed there to such an extent, that the land absolutely remained in a measure uncultivated.

The opening of a good road has, of course, raised the price of cider in those communes to a level, or nearly so, with its value in other parts of the country.

Many of these facts and anecdotes were gathered from the conversation of our friend the "juge de pays," as we sat enjoying together our cigars and coffee; and the rest were supplied by some statistical tables which he pointed out to me. He was a shrewd, intelligent fellow, and I should have well liked to have had his company during the rest of my walk through the district with which he seemed to be so well acquainted. As it was, we sat talking till nearly eleven o'clock — a

most rakish hour for a Breton juge de pays to be out of his bed and his home.

The next morning we rose almost with the light, and walked to La Chèze to breakfast. The road runs altogether along the low grounds, following for the latter half of the way the course of a stream which falls into the Lié at La Chèze. Immediately before arriving there, it makes a sharp turn, and descends a short but very steep hill, at the bottom of which, on the other side of the river Lié, lies the town. On the opposite bank, separated from it by the river, and isolated by its deep moat from the hill which the road descends curving round it, stands the old castle ; and immediately beneath the walls is the bridge over the broad but shallow river, by the side of which the road enters the town.

It would be difficult to find any where a combination of objects more calculated to delight the eye, and cheer the heart, than those which now greeted us. The bright, clear, rapid stream, which a weir a little higher up threw into most becoming confusion — the sun dancing merrily on the ripples —a girl, with her garments drawn up above the knee, wading into the stream after some of her charge of cows, who stood lashing

their sides with their tails, and placidly gazing at her without paying the smallest attention to her repeated calls — the town, with its little mingled knot of stone and thatched roofs, in every possible variety of disordered position — the picturesque turrets of the old-fashioned houses, with their conical roofs rising close to the water's edge, and shewing a reflected duplicate of each crazy chimney, each tuft of moss and lichen on the wall — the ivy-grown and grotesque-shaped masses of the castle ruins, with their sole remaining tall sexagon tower, thrown into shadow by a passing cloud, as it stood in its feudal pride alone, the grey stone bridge, and a covey of washerwomen gathered in a cluster on the margin of the stream immediately under the castle, and awakening its old echoes with their merry laughter and active battoirs, all combined, as seen from the road, to form a landscape of greater perfection and beauty in all its parts than the most skilful limner could invent or copy.

"Ah! that such beauty, varying in the light
Of living nature, cannot be portrayed
By words, nor by the pencil's silent skill;
But is the property of him alone
Who hath beheld it, noted it with care,
And in his mind recorded it with love!"

Wordsworth is right. It is impossible to

convey a perfect idea of a scene, whose beauty depends on such intricate and multiplied combinations of forms, and such subtle effects of light atmosphere and colour.

It was long ere I could quit the spot, at which the turn of the road first suddenly placed the scene before my eyes. But when I proceeded to descend the hill, every step placed the various objects in new lights, and different relations to each other, and produced new combinations and fresh beauty. In short, La Chèze is a most delightful spot as far as picturesque beauty is concerned ; and we were perfectly charmed with it, rambling up and down the hill, and among the ruins of the castle, and along the banks of the river, and finding new food for admiration at every change of place, till, alas ! that mortal part of man, which scenery, however lovely, will not content, began to cry aloud for breakfast. And then at length it was discovered that the picturesque La Chèze is the most wretched poverty-stricken hole that ever presumed to write itself town, and cheat the expectations of unfortunate travellers by the impudent audacity of assuming the honours of capital letters in the map.

When you consult the map, and plan your operations for the day accordingly, could

you have supposed that LA CHEZE would not furnish a breakfast? It is nothing less than an abominable cheat! and when, on entering the *town*, we found that it consisted of a few hovels, decrepitly standing around an enormous barn of a market-place, large enough to have contained them all, and looking like a dance of death, performed by houses instead of skeletons, we felt that we had been trifled with, and had a right to be angry accordingly.

After we had at length obtained and hastily swallowed a small portion of bread and milk, we again returned to the more promising exterior of the town; and while my companion sketched, I strolled down the Lié as far as St. Etienne-du-Gué, a delightful walk, which I suppose an angler would most absurdly profess to enjoy yet more than I did, seeing that the Lié is an excellent trout stream.

When I returned, I found a very pretty drawing nearly completed, and while the last touches were put to it, I again climbed into the interior of the castle ruins. Of these there was, in the year 1839, quite enough remaining to interest an antiquary, and to form a beautiful object in the landscape. But this will not long be the case, for workmen were

engaged in destroying them for the sake of the stones.

This castle, as well as many others in the adjoining districts, to the number, I think, of six or eight, belong to the Duc de Rohan, once one of the most illustrious names in the pages of Breton history. I was told that almost the only remains of a property that must have been enormous, consist, in this part of the country, of the sites and ruins of the feudal castles, and the market-places in the towns.

A pleasant walk brought us to Rohan. We passed through a more wooded part of the country than any we had yet seen. At one spot we crossed a very pretty glade in a coppice where some woodcutters were at work. Though the result of their toil is eventually so inimical to sylvan beauty, no labour is more picturesque than their's while it is in progress. Farther on, in the midst of a wide marsh, we passed the skeleton of a large farm-house and extensive buildings, abandoned and in ruins. The owner was murdered, and his home burned, we were told, in the revolution, and has remained in the improved state in which the patriots left it ever since. Its half-burnt timbers and blackened walls, added to the dreary effect of the

nature of its position in a low marsh, surrounded at a little distance by woods, made a perfect picture of the "abomination of desolation." We emerged soon afterwards from the wooded country, passed over some open "landes," and, crossing the frontier of the department of Morbihan, entered the cultivated ground again a little before reaching Rohan, which is so hid in its narrow valley, that we saw nothing of it till we looked down upon the roofs of the houses immediately below us.

Rohan is not so miserable a place as La Chèze, but bears equally unequivocal marks of having seen better days. There is again the huge market-place, "a world too large" for all the trifling commerce in the ordinary articles of consumption which takes place there on the day which the inhabitants persist in calling market-day; the quaint old houses, which betray the same unconquerable aversion to a perpendicular line that Nature is said to feel to a vacuum; the ruined castle, which, still more degraded than that of La Chèze, has little remaining above the level of the soil, all betokening that the little town of Rohan has lost, amid the changes and chances of this changeable world, all that it once had of wealth and importance.

We found, however, supper and beds, such as travellers ought to be able to content themselves with, and such as we might vainly have sought at La Chèze.

Rohan, though not so beautiful as La Chèze, has yet much to delight and occupy a sketcher. It is situated on the river Oust, whose narrow and rocky valley, though in some degree disfigured by the locks and towing-path of the canal from Nantes to Brest, which here invades the bed, and avails itself of the waters of the river, has much that is wild and picturesque.

Before going to bed, we strolled down to the castle. Here also men had been at work during the day, displacing the stones which yet remained one upon another, and piling them up in measured heaps for sale. An old woman was sitting among the ruins; and, though the twilight was rapidly fading into darkness, was still busily twirling her yarn from the never absent distaff. She accosted us with a nod and a "Bon soir, messieurs," which encouraged us to try whether some information or amusement might not be found in a little chat with her. She was exceedingly angry with the Duc de Rohan for destroying the ruins of his chateau, saying that he might just as well sell his father's

bones, and that she supposed he would, if any body would buy them. Here, it seemed, as in Normandy, the same popular idea prevails as to the origin of their castles and churches. The old lady assured us that both the castle and the little chapel, dedicated to St. Sampson, which was perched on a rock overhanging the opposite bank of the river, were both built by the English. We were looking down on the boldly-conceived position and unimpaired walls of the ancient little edifice, and I remarked that it was very well built. "Oui dame !" she answered sharply, "parce que les Anglais l' ont fait." She added that she had seen many English in Britanny, in 1815, "des beaux hommes, non comme nous, mais très hauts, d' un front noble, et vermeils comme des roses. Et moi aussi," she continued, after a pause, during which some not unpleasing recollection seemed to have occurred to her, "je n' etais pas mal dans ce temps la, non plus."

By this time it became nearly dark ; so the old woman was obliged to discontinue her spinning, and we went home to our early beds.

CHAPTER XXI.

Walk to Pontivy — Lower Britanny — Costume of the Peasants — Peculiarities of Celtic Races — Characteristics of Lower Britanny — Legends and Traditions of the country — Noyal-Pontivy —A Sunday at Pontivy — Congregation at Church — Sermon — Table d' hôte — Napoleon beat by Breton pertinacity— Castle at Pontivy — Fair at Pontivy — Physical insensibility — A trial of strength — Walk to Corlay— Village of Mur — Slate Quarries — Storm among the Hills — St. Mayeux — Corlay — The Castle — Anecdotes of its history — The Prince of Guémenés mark — Walks in the neighbourhood of Corlay — A Bas Breton Priest — Frightful Superstition at St. Gilles — Abbey of Coetmaloen — Wet Walk to Quintin — Arrival at St. Brieuc.

Our next walk brought us to Pontivy, a large and flourishing town; the capital of one of the arrondissements of the department of Morbihan.

As we proceeded westward, we soon began to perceive that we had passed the uncertain boundary which separates the upper from the lower province. The questions we addressed to the peasants we met received either no notice at all, or for all answer a silent shake of the head. The dress of the men was alto-

gether different from any we had yet seen. Their short, square-cut coats were of white cloth, or drugget, rather, and shewed to good effect their long hair, often black, and frequently hanging down literally to their waists. The edges of the coat, in front, the buttons and button-holes, and flaps of the pockets, which were high up under the arms, and cut in a vandyked semicircle, were all of crimson, which had a showy and whimsical, but far from ugly effect, upon the white ground. Frequently, the date of the year in which the coat was made might be seen embroidered on one side of the breast, and a representation of the chalice, and holy wafer of the "saint sacrament," upon the other side. I remarked some of these dates as far back as 1812. We observed many of these strange figures kneeling, with bare heads and uplifted hands and eyes, before the numerous crucifixes which are found almost every quarter of a mile along the sides of the road.

The dress of the women was various, but consisted most frequently of a close-fitting cloth boddice, of some bright colour, with close sleeves of a different hue, both turned up, and ornamented with cloth, of some third colour. A close cap, or hood, sometimes violet, often green, was the most common head-

dress. The men almost all walk, with their arms crossed upon their breast; or if one hand is occupied by the formidable-looking "pen bas," anglicé stick with a head, the other is thrust into the bosom. These thoughtful attitudes, together with their silent manners, and the severe and mournful stillness which seems the peculiar character of the country, are calculated to affect the imagination of a stranger powerfully.

Here, indeed, we were surrounded by that remarkable people, of whose primitive habits and unchanged manners I had heard so much. "De tous les peuples, qui se sont agglomerés dans la nation française," says a recent historian of Britanny, "les Bretons sont celui en qui on retrouve plus fortement empreint le caractère primitif d'une race, que quinze siècles n'ont pu faire disparaître." Sprung from a race entirely different from their neighbours, inhabiting a country poor, and, in a great measure isolated by position, they have hitherto preserved the most strongly marked traits of distinct nationality. In every instance in which people of Celtic origin have become integral portions of the same nation with another race, they have been slow to lose their peculiar characteristics. In Cornwall, the great barrier of separation,

a peculiar language, has, though only very lately, disappeared before the rapid advances of English civilization, and our highly perfected system of internal commerce and communication.

In Wales the Celts are still a distinct people, though the superior compactness of our island, and the more frequent interchange of communication, has prevented their remaining so much behind the rest of the nation as is the case in Britanny. It is there that the Celt is still in every respect a Celt. This people, who for three hundred years have constituted an important portion of the kingdom of France, have not only preserved a language, character, physiognomy, and habits, totally different from those of every other part of the nation, but seem to have remained stationary and unchanged, amid the onward progress of all around them.

It is impossible to conceive a more striking contrast than that which is observed on passing from busy, bustling, thriving Normandy, to this sombre land, where every thing seems to belong to and to speak of the past. It is like walking into a past century, and leaving the noisy, active, living world behind one. The general features of the country, too, contribute their share to produce this effect. The

scattered nature of the population, the utter and unmitigated desolation of the vast moors, above all, the stupendous monuments of a period lost to history, which are encountered almost at every step, give to the scene a death-like stillness, which weighs upon the spirits, and turns the thoughts to the silent past.

The vast quantity of these extraordinary monuments found throughout this country, but more especially in the department of Morbihan, far exceeding in number and extent those known in any other part of the world, are one principal source of interest to a tourist in Britanny. Every thing combines to prove that this country was one of the principal seats of Druidism; and it is surprising, that so many writers on Celtic antiquities should have neglected to visit a province so worthy of their attention.

"Ce pays sauvage," says the author quoted above, "couvert d'un ciel brumeux, environné d'une mer turbulente, était la terre classique de ce culte mystérieux. L'île de Sein, dont parle le geographe Pomponius Méla, était le séjour des vierges fatidiques, qui soulevaient et conjuraient les tempêtes. L'extrème Thulé, que les anciens croyaient au bout du monde, n'était autre, à ce qu'il paraît, que l'île

d'Ouessant. Pline à rapporté les mystères, qui se consommaient dans les îles Vénétiques. Plutarque dit que le géant Briarée y tenait le dieu de temps endormi. Procope raconte que les pêcheurs de cette côte, réveillés la nuit par une puissance invisible, passaient les ames des morts dans l'île des bienheureux. On voit qu'au rapport des écrivains de l'antiquité, cette terre peu connue était déjà remplie de traditions merveilleuses. Le Mont Belen, aujourd'hui le mont St. Michel, consacré au dieu Belenus, l'Apollon des Celtes, était habité et ensanglanté par des magiciennes, qui changeaient les navigateurs en animaux. La Roche aux Fées, la Caverne de l'Enfer, l'Ile Benie, le Val sans Retour, la Forêt des Pleurs sont des noms qui attestent que les lieux auxquels on les à donnés étaient pleins de souvenirs."

Nor are the recollections and histories attached to these localities yet extinct among the people. Many of the fables of local superstition and tradition, which have in other countries been lost, or preserved only by the gleaning care of the antiquary, are here still subjects of popular belief and respect. The gigantic stones erected by their earliest ancestors for temples or for monuments, are still objects of superstitious veneration to

their descendants ; though in some instances the clergy have succeeded after a long struggle in attaching catholic legends to monuments intended by their authors to perpetuate the memory of far other facts and deeds. In many parts of the country, ceremonies, evidently of Pagan origin, are still observed ; and it may surprise many persons as much as it did me to learn, that within a hundred years there were in the Isle of Ouessant persons still professing Paganism.

We passed through the village of Noyal-Pontivy, about half-way between Rohan and the latter town, and admired much its lofty and elegant Gothic spire, the first ecclesiastical building of any pretensions to beauty we had seen for some time, the churches in the Côtes du Nord being almost entirely poor and shabby. Immediately beneath this beautiful spire, the men of an age equally religious with that which produced it, but far less tasteful, had raised a gigantic crucifix some forty feet high, painted of a bright green, and "parsemé" with large gilded tears from top to bottom.

We remained some days at Pontivy, and were much amused by the opportunities it gave us of observing in many respects the manners of the people. It was about eight

o'clock on Sunday morning, when we arrived there from Rohan, and, after we had breakfasted, we went to the principal church.

We found it crowded with men and women in nearly equal proportions, but all or almost all belonged to the class of peasants. Perhaps, I might say, without exception, all the men were so. The men were entirely separated from the female part of the congregation, not by any provision made for such division in the arrangements of the church, or even by any direct or very determinate line. But all the men were in a mass together in the middle of the nave, and near the great western door, while the dense crowd of women placed immediately in front of the altar, and ranged down the sides of the nave, surrounded the male part of the congregation. The effect produced was very remarkable. During most part of the service, the whole congregation kneeled on the pavement of the church, and all preserved throughout an appearance, not only of decorum, but of deep and earnest devotion. When the service or their own separate devotions did not require that position, many of the women remained sitting upon the stones, where they had been kneeling. Almost the whole of those present had come into the town from the neighbour-

ing communes, though the female portion of them might have had a small sprinkling of "citadines" among them.

The sermon was on this occasion in French, being preached alternately in that language and Breton. I should suppose that not one fifth part of the congregation were able to understand one word of it. That, however, would naturally be of small importance to a flock taught to believe in the efficacy of the mass, and the advantage of being present at it; and accordingly both were listened to with the same appearance of profound attention. They would not, however, have profited more if they had understood every syllable. For all that portion which did not consist of "Oh! mes frères!" accompanied by a taking off and putting on again his conical, tufted cap, was devoted by the preacher to a summary survey of the evidences of Christianity, and a catalogue of saints and confessors from St. Peter to Bossuet, who had added their testimony to their credibility.

There must be a great number of priests in Britanny who could not have preached the sermon I heard; for it exhibited a certain degree of acquaintance with church history, and a tolerable view of the outline and ge-

neral features of the evidences of revealed religion. But of what use could this be, even if they had understood every word of it, to the congregation for whose edification it was intended—to eager, ardent, unquestioning believers — men over whose simple minds doubt never threw a shade, and who are disposed to believe only too much, rather than too little! While of what they do require, not a word was to be found. Not a syllable was uttered by the preacher, which could by possibility have conveyed a lesson of morality, or an awakening idea to the minds or consciences of his hearers. Not a syllable was there which could teach a man any single portion of his duty to God, to his fellow-man, or to himself, or arouse him to the consciousness that religion consists in aught else than a barren reverence for sacred things, and the observance of ceremonial rites.

During the remainder of the day I observed great numbers of peasants, dressed almost all alike, in the costume which I have described, standing together in groups in front of the doors of the church, or in the market-places, of which Pontivy has three, and conversing for hours together in their grave and quiet manner. A number of idle men met together

in Normandy would have presented a very different appearance.

At the inn we were at during our stay at Pontivy—not a good one, though the best—the table d'hôte was literally such, for we dined with mine host and his wife, and five children. Here also, as at Loudeac, the hours were twelve and eight; for, though Pontivy is one of the most commercial towns of Britanny, yet, being in the interior, it is more behind-hand in its manners and mode of living than the towns on the sea-coast.

It is situated on the canal from Nantes to Brest, and on the river Blavet, and is as nearly as possible the central point of Britanny. The favourable circumstances of its position and its commercial activity drew to it the notice of Napoleon, who made a futile and absurd attempt, which no one acquainted with the Breton character would have dreamed of, to change its ancient name to Napoleonville. The commencement of the greatness and grandeur which was about to fall upon Pontivy, from the imperial favour and patronage, may be seen in a new and unfinished street, which strangely contrasts its newness, broadness, and straightness, with the narrow crooked old lanes composing the greatest part of the rest of the town.

On an eminence overlooking the town is another of the Duc de Rohan's castles, a part of which is still occupied by a few families, to whom his agent lets the habitable rooms. This castle was destroyed in the civil wars of Britanny, and the existing edifice was built in 1485. It was formerly a quadrangular building, with a court in the centre, and low, conical-roofed towers at each corner. The front and one side of the quadrangle only remain, and these are rapidly going to decay. One set of rooms in the tower, at the extremity of the remaining side, had just been abandoned as unsafe; and indeed it seemed as if that part of the building might every instant be expected to fall. All the inhabitants of the old place came rushing out of their various nooks and corners, like disturbed rooks in a rookery, to prevent my entering this threatening tower, which they said I should infallibly shake down if I attempted to ascend it.

The story goes that Louis XIII., for some rebellion in which the Duc de Rohan of that period was engaged, ordered one tower of every chateau belonging to him to be pulled down. And this it seems was the beginning of that destruction which will, ere long, complete it's work on that of Pontivy. Unlike,

however, those of La Chèze and Rohan, this chateau seems never to have been a place of much strength, either from the nature of its construction, or from its position.

Before we left Pontivy we saw another fair there, like that of Collinée, chiefly frequented for the sale and purchase of cattle. The scene was of course much the same as we had before witnessed; but the figures, both of men and women, which composed the busy yet comparatively quiet crowd, were still more grotesque and wild-looking than those at Collinée; and the singular strangeness of the whole was enhanced by hearing, in every direction around, the harsh sounds and guttural pronunciation of a new and uncouth language.

The stillness of demeanour, the grave, severe manners, and apathetic silence of the Bas-Breton peasants, is one of their most striking characteristics. Unless when strongly excited by some powerful feeling, there is a degree of stedfast immobility about them, which forms the strongest possible contrast to the habits and temperament of the peasants of the rest of France. I have been assured also that their bodily insensibility is correspondingly remarkable. My own experience of the difficulties of making my way through a Breton

crowd, would lead me to think them utterly destitute of the sense of feeling. The most vigorous punches in the ribs, and most determined application of the whole force of the back and shoulders against his person, will fail to make a Breton peasant move out of your way, or even look round.

I saw in the fair of Pontivy a crowd gathered in a circle around a fine spirited horse, of a much larger breed than those of the country, and of great power; when suddenly, being startled at something, he kicked out, with the whole force of both his hind-legs, and struck a man full in the ribs. I thought that his bones, of course, were shivered, and that in all probability the man was killed. But, to my great surprise, one of the bystanders helped him up, and in a minute he walked away, and nobody thought any more about the matter.

Not far from this I saw a novel, and, to me, interesting trial of strength. The traces of a stout, well-conditioned cart-horse were attached to a splinter bar, which two men took hold of in their hands. They then placed themselves, so that their feet were against the side of a small grip in the road, and, in that position, tried their strength against that of the horse. He was, by word

and whip, excited to put forth his utmost strength, but totally without effect. The two men held him back, without being moved from their position, so that he could not advance an inch. One of the men alone then tried the experiment. But this time the horse was easily victorious.

When we left Pontivy, we turned northwards, and again entered the Côtes du Nord. Our first walk was to Mur, and thence to Corlay. Our route, as far as the first of these, lay along the valley of the Blavet, and passed either through or within sight of several villages closer together, and with much handsomer churches than we had seen since entering the country of the Méné.

Beyond Mur, we left the cultivated country, and again entered upon the moors. Near this village there are large slate-quarries, from which great quantities of very small slates are obtained. We saw several of the little hill-ponies, carrying very large loads of them, packed in panniers, and meeting in a high pile over the animal's back.

As we advanced into the hills, a range of which we had to cross before reaching Corlay, the wind began to rise, and the sky to grow as black as night; and presently down came the rain in a style which, in five minutes,

would have made all attempts to find shelter useless. But fortunately an overhanging bank saved us from the pitiless pelting of the greatest part of it. The moderate degree of damping that we did get, was amply compensated by some of the most superb effects of light and shade I ever witnessed. The sun was shining brightly on the cultivated valley of the Blavet, along which we looked down to the westward, having since Mur continued our northward course, while at that point the river had made a rapid curve, and its brightness brought into clear view every village steeple and white farm-house; while the dim and mysterious-looking range of hills in front of us were of a deep dark purple, which I have often called exaggerated when I have seen it attempted on canvass.

Nearly on the top of the hills we were crossing, we passed the village of St. Mayeux, whose beautifully elegant steeple argues a degree of science and taste in the architect, which it is surprising to see lavished on the church of a small village in such a remote and secluded situation.

A little before reaching Corlay, we again descended into the lower cultivated ground, and were by no means sorry when we found ourselves housed, more comfortably than we

could have expected, in "la grande maison." A good blazing fire and the prospect of an excellent supper soon repaired the effects of our wetting, and left us very much disposed to enjoy and be thankful for a long night's rest.

The next days were devoted to the examination of Corlay and its environs. It is the centre of a remarkably fine game country; and no objection is made by the proprietors of the land to any person sporting over it. Some few years ago a party of Englishmen came here, and shot an immense quantity of game. Though they went about it systematically, and bagged so much that it might well have roused the jealousy of the natives, no remonstrance or objection was made, until it was discovered that all their game was regularly sent off to the London market for sale; and then the proprietors very properly agreed together to forbid them to come upon their ground, which soon put an end to this very unhandsome abuse of their liberality.

The Duc de Rohan, who is a perfect Marquis de Carabbas here, possesses the remains of an old castle at Corlay also. It is picturesquely placed on the north side of the town on a knoll, one side of which is precipitous, and rises abruptly out of the water of a

small lake, which effectually defended the castle on that side. The foundation of the building dates from 1198, but it was nearly destroyed in the wars between the houses of Blois and Montfort, which ravaged Britanny in the fourteenth century. In 1485, it was rebuilt by John Viscount of Rohan in a strong square, with a round tower at each corner, and another to guard the entrance, to which some tradition, now irretrievably lost, has left the romantic appellation of "Tour des Amours."

There was a subterraneous passage, with two branches, of which the mouth may yet be seen, leading from this castle. The one branch led to another fort, called Coz Castle, in Breton, which means old castle, about a quarter of a league from Corlay; and the other opened at a spot not quite so far off, called "Parc ar Golifet," or the field of hares. The people relate a story of a traveller who came to Corlay, and, having procured lights, descended into this passage, and has never more been heard of from that time to this. The entrance of this "souterrain" has since been stopped up. During the wars of the League, the castle of Corlay was seized and held for the parliament by the too celebrated Fontenelle. There is no part of Bri-

tanny, in which traditionary tales of the cruelties and abominations of this terrible chieftain are not still rife. Though he remained in possession of Corlay little more than two years, the peasants still tell stories of his ravaging the country, burning the houses, carrying off the young girls, etc. etc.

Among other anecdotes, they point out the spot in the midst of the ruins of the castle where, one night, when Fontenelle was giving a ball, the whole floor gave way beneath the dancers, and all were precipitated into the vaults below. Most of the revellers were more or less hurt, but Fontenelle himself broke his leg, and remained lame ever after.

He was at last driven from Corlay by the Maréchal d' Aumont, Henry the Fourth's general in Britanny. When he heard that the maréchal's forces were marching against him, he sent a spy to ascertain whether they had any cannon. This man was caught and made drunk, and then paraded over and over again, before four or five old guns which had no carriages, and then sent back to his master. He reported that he had seen a formidable array of artillery; and Fontenelle at once gave up the castle. It certainly would have been impossible to hold it against cannon, for, though

on an eminence, it is entirely commanded by a superior height, which rises immediately above it on the side of the town, the whole of which stands on higher ground.

We had several very agreeable walks in different directions around Corlay.

At the distance of about a mile from the town, a knoll was pointed out to us, which is called to the present day "la butte de justice," from the circumstance of a gallows having always stood there before the revolution, in token of the seignoral rights of the prince of Guémené, who enjoyed here a jurisdiction with power of life and death.

We strolled a long way by the banks of the little river Salon, till we came to the village of Canihuel, near which, at some little distance from the river, there is a menhir upon a hill. It was in this village that I saw a group, of which the adjoining page presents a faithful sketch, which may, in some degree, serve to illustrate what I have before said of the station and manners of the majority of the priests in the rural districts of Britanny. They are almost invariably the sons of peasants, and, as far as possible, they naturally preserve the tastes, manners, associations, and even dress, of the class to which they belong. The good priest — for such he might have been, as far as his


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lights and education permitted him to be— who unconsciously sat for his portrait to my rapid-handed and quick-eyed companion, had not only the sabots, which I saw frequently on priests, even in some towns, but had tucked up his cassock so far as to shew very plainly the extremely unclerical "bragon bras," or large loose breeches of a Breton peasant. The same short, black pipe amused his leisure, which might have suited the mouth of his father or brother; and the same idiom and sentiments formed the constituent parts of his conversation with his fellow peasants.

Returning through another part of the commune, we past near a pond, on the banks of which are found, in considerable quantities, a sort of stone, which easily splits into little slender quadrilateral bars, which invariably, if snapped crosswise, exhibit the mark of a cross drawn from corner to corner of the section. We brought away some specimens of the stone, in all of which, when broken, we found the cross.

Another excursion may be taken to St. Nicholas, a commune on the banks of the Salon, below Canihuel; whence a pretty walk along the valley, which is occupied by a succession of water-meads, irrigated, not artifi-

cially, but by the extreme natural sinuosity of the stream, will bring the traveller to the village of St. Gilles Pligeaux, a saint who, according to the creed of the neighbourhood, has both the power and the will to cure of epilepsy all such as prostrate themselves in his church, on the first Sunday in May. This complaint is here called "la maladie de St. Gilles," and I was assured, that the scene which might be witnessed in the village on the prescribed day, is a most extraordinary one. Several unfortunates, chiefly women, may then be seen, almost always, with the malady upon them, excited to the utmost violence by the cries and wild shouting of a crowd of women who accompany them, by their own nervous agitation, and by the contagious influence of the sight of each other. In this state they are dragged, rather than led, to the church, where they are detained in forced prostration, till the fit is past or moderated.

A little beyond this wonder-working church, in a pretty position, once stood the rich abbey of Coetmaloen, whose name often occurs in the annals of Britanny. At the present day, not one stone remains upon another, to mark the site of the proud cloister, whose albatial mitre was worn by no less than three of the

Guise family in succession, in the beginning of the seventeenth century.

At the end of two or three days, which the comfort of our quarters at Corlay and the pleasant country around it had tempted us to spend in rambling about in the neighbourhood, we left it, and started at daybreak to walk to Quintin, a town about four leagues to the northwards. We had had fine weather at Corlay, but it was fated that our departure thence, like our entrée, should be gloomy. We had proceeded only a mile or two from our pleasant quarters, and had just begun to enter upon the high moors, which here also divide the valleys in which the two towns are situated, and so got beyond all reach of shelter, when the rain began to fall in torrents. The soil was of such a nature as to become extremely slippery in the wet; and the rest of our progress to Quintin forcibly reminded me of that interesting instance of determined perseverance recorded by Cocker, in his amusing collection of anecdotes, of a snail who ascended one foot of a wall every day, and slipped down two every night, and, by patient industry, arrived at the top at last.

Much in this manner did we progress towards Quintin, and so, also, did we at length

arrive, sopped, jaded, and miserable. We got some breakfast, however; and, having remained in the town just long enough to see that it contains a large modernized chateau, belonging to the Duc de Choiseul, and sundry picturesque old houses, and that it is built on the side of a steep rocky valley, through which the river Gouat runs, and which in tolerable weather must be extremely pretty, we hired a cabriolet, and made the best of our way through continued rain to St. Brieuc.

CHAPTER XXII.

Wet Day at St. Brieuc—Townsfolk and Peasants — Origin of their Disunion—Chouannerie—" Acte de Foi"—" Acte d'Esperance"—State of St. Brieuc during the Chouannerie — Market—Origin of the City—Curious Feudal Rights of the Bishop — A Bas Breton Clockmaker — Sale of a Pianoforte — " Tour de Cesson"—Walk to Binic — Departure of a "Terreneuvier" — Chapel of Notre Dame de la Cour — Valley of the Leff — Epitaph — Arrival at Guimgamp.

Can there be anybody so fortunate as never to have known the miseries of a wet day at an inn? In no situation does one more lament the loss of time, or more obstinately persist in turning it to no account. We had, by dint of a good deal of coaxing, persuaded the maid to light a fire in our bedroom, and had tolerably dried ourselves. We had chairs—such as they were—and a table; pens and ink; and the circulating library of St. Brieuc could have supplied us with a greasy dogs-eared copy of Victor Hugo, or, if we could not have contented ourselves with that, a clean one of Racine.

Nevertheless, all these comforts and luxuries were utterly despised and rejected, and we very wisely wished for nothing but that which we could not command—the cessation of the rain, and power to go out into the town without being again wet through. Of all that I saw during my tour, nothing remains more deeply impressed upon my mind than the exact shape and combination of the paving-stones on which I watched the rain plashing beneath my window in the street at St. Brieuc.

I did read, it is true, the half volume of M. Habasque's "Notions sur le littoral des Côtes du Nord," which relates to St. Brieuc; but the only notion of that town which it imparted to me, was that it contained singularly little to interest any traveller, be the object of his tour what it might. To those who wish to observe the Breton character and mode of life, St. Brieuc can present no attraction. It is only curious to see how entirely the townsmen are a people apart. In the smaller towns this is not the case. But St. Brieuc is the capital of the department, and every thing there seems to wear a modern administrative aspect. Employés, avocats, papers, bureaus, and large new buildings with fine iron rails, and gilded spear-heads, and tricoloured flags,

and sentries, are the characteristic features of the place. There is something like activity in the streets, too; and the shopkeepers read the "siècle," and the churches are left to the women, much as in the more civilized parts of France.

The fact is, that the inhabitants of the larger towns and the campagnards are no longer one and the same people. Not only their manners and way of life, but their character and modes of thinking upon all subjects, are altogether at variance. The general feeling of opposition and separation, which, arising first from difference of interest and feeling, was aggravated into the most fierce and virulent animosity during the revolution, and the prevalence of "Chouannerie," has never been lost in the minds of either class.

It has been said that this hatred on the side of the peasants arose from envy of the superior comfort and luxuries of the towns. But such will hardly be the opinion of those who are acquainted with the character and habits of the people, and the history of the struggle. Neither will they be able, on the other hand, to agree with those who find the animating principle of chouannerie in the same high-wrought feelings of loyalty to their

king, and affection to their chiefs, which excited the peasants of La Vendée to their gallant and devoted efforts in the cause of lawful liberty and social order.

It may be very much doubted whether the majority of the Chouans either knew or cared much about the fate or fortunes of the Bourbon race. Nor would the peasants of Britanny have ever troubled themselves to inquire how matters were managed at Paris, or have cared a straw whether the rest of France chose to call itself a republic or a monarchy, or made the least objection to the Parisians guillotining one another as much as ever they thought good for themselves. But when men came among their quiet communes and secluded villages, requiring them to abandon the customs of their fathers, altering the names of places and things, destroying monuments consecrated by the veneration of ages, outraging their feelings and prejudices, imprisoning, banishing, and murthering the seigneurs whose fathers their fathers had looked up to with respect and affection through a long series of generations, and, far worst of all, depriving them of their priests, the sedate Breton was no longer apathetic. The country with one accord arose, prepared to fight to the last gasp for their

immemorial usages, their seigneurs, priests, and altars.

The larger towns, in which revolutionary ideas and doctrines had been, as in other parts of France, long since gradually growing up, became at once republican; and thus a civil war of the most frightful nature that can be conceived arose throughout the country. In the towns were the republican authorities, who licensed and encouraged the frightful excesses which here as elsewhere marked the presence of the republican army. In the towns were the barracks of the ruffian soldiers who committed these atrocities; and there also were the prisons in which their chiefs and priests were confined. It was therefore against the towns that the attacks and vengeance of the peasants were directed.

The spirit which animated the people may be read in the following doggrel song, which was very widely circulated at the time, and which shews what it was that they considered their chief grievance.

"Acte de Foi.

"Je crois fermement que l'Eglise
Quoi que la nation en dise
Du Saint-Père relèvera
Tant que le monde durera;
Que les évêques qu'elle nomme
N'étant point reconnus de Rome
Sont des intrus, des apostats,
Et les curés des scélérats,

Qui devaient craindre davantage
Un Dieu que leur serment outrage.

"Acte d'esperance.
J'espere avant que ce soit peu
Les apostats verront beau jeu;
Que nous reverrons dans nos chaires
Nos vrais pasteurs, nos vrais vicairs;
Que les intrus disparaîtront;
Que la divine providence
Qui veille toujours sur la France,
En dépit de la nation
Nous rendra la religion."

Of course it will easily be conceived that, when once a spirit of lawless violence had gone forth, and the usual barriers of authority and social order were thrown down, the deeds of either party were almost equally reprehensible. The aggrieved, in their turn, no less than the aggressors, were guilty of the most atrocious excesses. Many men who would, under other circumstances, have lived and died quiet villagers and peaceable members of society, became, when roused to vengeance by injury and insult, when blood was flowing around them, and scenes of violence and death had grown too common to be any longer subjects of horror or compunction, ferocious and blood-thirsty ruffians. Many others, as always happens in similar periods of excitement and confusion, who would in any case have been the outcasts of society and rebels against civil law, availed them-

selves of the temper of the times to indulge their propensities more unrestrainedly, and perpetrate more openly a systematic course of indiscriminate violence and plunder.

Few towns endured more from the Chouans, during that period of distress and suffering to all parties, than St. Brieuc. Besides frequent attacks and surprisals, there ensued such a scarcity of all the necessaries of life, that a pound of meat cost three livres, of butter four, of candles eight livres. The assignats lost twenty per cent of their nominal value. The prisons were full of victims. The markets were without corn, while the peasants made pretence of selling their produce to each other, in order to evade the law, which made it penal to withhold it.

Any attempt, however, to give an account of the state of Britanny at that time would seduce us too far into an interesting and most inviting field, which, much as the stirring tale deserves to be told, is far too extensive to be entered on in a digression.

Some of the particulars which I read in M. Habasque's book, during our wet afternoon at St. Brieuc, interested me much, and my subsequent researches proved that very many most curious and characteristic details might be gathered from many sources re-

specting the history of the province during the revolution.

The next morning the sun once more showed himself, and we lost no time in profiting by his condescension. It was market-day at St. Brieuc; but I did not observe any objects of commerce exposed for sale beyond the articles of daily necessary consumption. In one part of the town there was a small meat market, and under the dark, heavy, prison-like towers of the cathedral, in front of the western doors, an immense quantity of butter was exposed for sale. The city dames and soubrettes were bustling about from one large basketful to another, tasting the huge lumps, and chattering away an incredible quantity of words to every bargain; while the more silent peasants for the most part made no answer to any remarks upon their goods, and replied to any proposal of abatement in the price by a silent shake of the head.

The cathedral is a large, heavy building, with as little beauty of any sort as a Gothic church, of the thirteenth century, can be well supposed to have. At one side of the east end, there are some trifling remains of Roman building, which must have made a part of some anterior edifice. St. Brieuc, like a

great number of the early Breton saints, was a native of the British Isles. His father's name was Cerp, and his mother's Eldruda; and they were people of high rank in Wales. They were pagans — but their son having gone to Paris, was there converted to Christianity, by St. Germain, and ordained priest in the church of Notre Dame, in the year 549. Having determined to attempt the conversion of the pagans of Armorica, he set sail, and landed in the mouth of the river Legué, where he found a pagan Jarle, named Rigwall, who, at first, opposed his preaching. But, upon hearing who he was, he recognized him as a near relation — a proof, as M. de Freminville remarks, of the frequent communication which subsisted in those days between the two Britains — was converted himself, and gave him the wooden palace in which he lived, for a monastery.

This was the nucleus around which the city formed itself; and, till the revolution, it never lost the marks of ecclesiastical supremacy, which its early origin had impressed upon it. The bishop possessed three quarters of the town, and his sundry feudal rights were of a nature sufficiently strange and "bizarre." More than a hundred houses in the town owed him a rent of a pound, or half a pound each

of pepper. An ancient French proverb says: "cher comme poivre," which seems to shew that that spice was once considered of high value. But it is clear, that his reverence the bishop must have turned pepper-dealer, for it is impossible that he could have used from fifty to a hundred pounds of pepper annually.

Another claim of a still more extraordinary character was made by the old bishops of St. Brieuc. The proprietors of the two houses, situated in the "Rue de l'Allée Menault," whose back windows looked on a stream, called the Lingoguet, were held by their tenure to beat the water of this brook every year, on the vigil of St. John the Baptist's day, repeating as they did so, thrice over, "little frogs, hold your tongues; little frogs, hold your tongues; little frogs, hold your tongues—my lord sleeps—Disturb not the sleep of my lord." They were then to go to the bishop's palace, and make a declaration, that "they had performed their service, that the frogs said nothing now, and made no more noise." And this was termed, performing a "Depri de grenouilles." I have heard of many quaint and ridiculous conditions attached to old feudal tenures, but this, I think, surpasses them all in absurdity and puerility. The term "Depri de gre-

nouilles," it is impossible either to translate or understand. "Depri" is a term of feudal jurisprudence, signifying the declaration which a vassal is bound to make to his lord, of his wish to become the purchaser of property in his manor. How utterly impossible is it to guess or conceive what incident or superstition it could have been, which originated this serious fool's-play between the reverend bishop and his tenants!

The cathedral is surmounted by a hideous slate-covered little clock tower. The inhabitants complain grievously of the good-for-nothingness of the clock in it, which strikes any hour that comes into its head first, and three or four, sometimes, in the space of a quarter of an hour. They had once a far better one; but, upon one occasion, when it had stopped, a good Bas-Breton, not being able to set it in motion, could bethink him of no better way to make it speak, than hitting it a tremendous crack with his sabot, which smashed it.

In walking back to our inn, after one of our excursions in the town, we saw an auction going on in a house where the effects of a bankrupt were being sold off; and, as it chanced to be market-day, there were a good many peasants among the crowd that

thronged the room. At the moment we entered, a very old harpsichord was put up at the price of five francs. No one seemed inclined to offer any advance upon this moderate sum, till some malevolent spirit prompted a poor peasant to bid five francs and four sous. The company appeared somewhat surprised at his temerity ; and he himself seemed bitterly to repent the deed he had done, when it became probable that the article would be knocked down to him. He inquired, with a faltering voice, what the thing was, and for what purpose it was used : the auctioneer expounded to him the nature and purpose of the machine ; he was still more distressed, and very humbly inquired what he should do with it if he bought it. "Play to your wife, when she dances, to be sure," was the answer. "But," urged the poor fellow, eager to be let off, "I do not understand music, and my wife never dances." "Oh pour le savoir ce n' est pas necessaire du tout," retorted the auctioneer, determined not to lose his customer; " et si la femme ne danse pas, tu peux t' en servir quand tu chantes tes vêpres." And, so saying, the harpsichord was knocked down at the sum of five francs and four sous, and the unfortunate purchaser paid the amount, and set about

examining his new acquisition with much dismay, mixed with curiosity, amid the laughter and jeers of the crowd of citizens.

The next day, we walked down to the port of St. Brieuc, which is about a mile or a mile and a half from the town, at the mouth of the river Legué. On a hill, on one side of the narrow valley in which the river runs, are the remains of an old tower, called the "Tour de Cesson," which was built, in 1395, by John, the fourth duke of Britanny, for the purpose of protecting the bay of St. Brieuc and the Legué from the incursions and depredation of the Norman pirates. In those days, Britanny was the more advanced and more civilized country of the two, but Normandy moves faster onwards, and has long since passed her old rival. It is worth while to mount the hill and examine this old building, which is curious from its extreme strength, and the wonderful degree of cohesion of its parts. For it was ruined in 1598 by a mine, which has rent the fabric asunder longitudinally, leaving one half of the whole height of the tower standing alone on this extremely exposed spot, where the wind frequently rages with a violence that might be fatal to many an unscathed building. Yet there stand the old walls to the height of four

stories, defying alike the impetuous attacks of the tempest, and the more lingering and insidious hostility of time. The tower was round on the outside, and sexagonal in the interior, and has the appearance of extraordinary massiveness and solidity. The only access to the interior was by a door, not on the ground but on the first floor; and the narrow staircase, which communicates with the rooms above and below, is hollowed out of the enormous thickness of the walls.

A very long quay, which workmen were engaged in making still longer, has been constructed on the banks of the Legué, which will, notwithstanding, barely admit vessels of two hundred tons. We returned to the town by a little deep and very narrow valley, which opens into that of the Legué, conveying to it the waters of a nameless stream. The almost perpendicular sides of this ravine are clothed with the richest profusion of the bright yellow blossoms of the broom and furze. These shrubs both grow with great luxuriance in most parts of Britanny, and especially in the neighbourhood of St. Brieuc. The blossom too is, I think, larger, and of a deeper, richer colour than on our commons. The ravine, through which we walked back from the port to St. Brieuc, literally glowed, as if its

banks were from top to bottom of burnished gold.

We left St. Brieuc early the next morning, and enjoyed our walk to Binic, a little port on the coast, three or four leagues to the north. After crossing the valley of the Legué, we mounted a hill, and had a very fine view of the sea, with the predominating tower of Cesson, and the city we had left. Soon after we passed the village of Pordic, where the bell was established in a framework by itself in the churchyard, having been blown down from its more exalted station in the steeple. Thence we pursued our walk through a cultivated country, pretty thickly set with villages, and chateaus with their little pointed towers, and large old mansion-house-looking farms, till we came upon the brow of the low cliffs, which here border the sea, and saw Binic before us, snugly niched into the mouth of the small valley of the Je.

This very pretty miniature port had attracted us by reports of Roman baths, and vestiges of a camp, but no traces of them are now to be found. We thought our walk well recompensed, nevertheless, by the prettiness of the place, with its miniature pier of good granite, and its fleet of fishing-boats. But

Binic, though in appearance a mere fishing village, is a wealthy place, and sends out annually no less than twenty-eight ships to Newfoundland for the cod-fishery. The day of our arrival was a busy one, for the last of the "Terreneuviers" was about to leave the port that afternoon. She was alongside of the pier, taking in the last bushels of her provision of salt, and a long line of women sat couched under the lea of some old boats, watching the progress of the operation. I took some interest in observing them. There were many young laughing faces, and several older anxious ones. The first knew only hope; the latter had learned to fear also. All must have felt anxiety as their fathers, brothers, sons, husbands, and lovers, were on the point of leaving them till next September.

We eat for breakfast at Binic an excellent fish they call a bar; and then walked in a western direction from the coast to Lantic. It was apparently the fête of some saint, much patronized at Lantic, for service was being performed in the church, which was crowded to excess; and a long line of kneeling men and women reached from the open doors all across the churchyard.

Somewhere near this place, we knew, existed a certain "chapelle de Notre Dame de

la Cour," which we had been told was worth visiting. We were not long in finding it; and, when we reached it, were much struck by the existence of so much elegance, and so noble proportions in such a spot. In comparing this building, noble as it is, with the Sainte Chapelle at Paris, I cannot but think that M. de Freminville speaks with something of the provincial partialities of a local antiquary. In his opinion, however, the choir and east end are so similar to those of the Sainte Chapelle, that one is led to think that the chapel of Notre Dame de la Cour must have been built from the designs of Pierre de Montreuil, the celebrated architect, who built the lovely Sainte Chapelle at Paris for St. Louis.

We observed in this chapel an ex-voto painting of a vessel suffering shipwreck, with an inscription beneath it, which, after describing in nautical language the state in which the ship was, goes on to set forth that, " dans cet état de détresse, ou tout secours humain était impuissant, on eut recours au ciel; on invoqua MARIE, et tout l'equipage fit un vœu a la MERE DE DIEU, qui exauça sur-le-champ leur prière. La Sainte Vierge, toute brillante de lumière, redressa tout-à-coup le navire, et daigna apparôitre visiblement à un

jeune enfant de l'équipage, qui en la voyant s'ecria qu'il voyait une belle Dame redresser le batiment avec son bras. Mai 27, l'an 1836."

From Lantic we walked to Chatelaudren, a small town, situated on the river Leff, and thence to Guimgamp, the capital of one of the arrondissements of the Côtes du Nord. As far as Chatelaudren we walked through a country chiefly cultivated, whose most remarkable feature is the extraordinary profusion of the broom-blossom. Every bank and hedge, every upland and moor, blaze with gold, and make the country a veritable El Dorado.

From Chatelaudren we diverged a little into the valley of the Leff, to visit some remains of a priory of the Templars. These are but trifling, and possess no picturesque beauty. The valley, however, in which they are situated, made up for their want of it. It is wide and rocky, with a bottom of flat very green meadows, through which the Leff runs in two or three different streams, now joining and now again dividing and winding, so as to make a perfect labyrinth of water.

From Chatelaudren to Guimgamp, our journey lay along the high-road. We passed the village of Plouagat, in the churchyard of

which there is a small menhir, and in the porch of the church the following epitaph on a ci-devant rector:—

"Hic jacet expectans promissæ munera lucis
Pauper Evangelii præco, Christique minister.
Staturâ parvus tenui, virtute minor, heu!
Ante Deum minimus meritis nullusve, Johannes
Zacharias Bourgneuf, multis indignus ab annis
Ecclesiæ rector vulgo de Plouagat. O vos
Dilexæ, quas rexit, oves, succurrite vestro
Pastori precibus, vestris succurrite votis.
Ipse gregi præstabit opem; redamabit amantes.
Flectere tentetis supremi Judicis iram;
Ipse memor patrem, Christo mediante, rogabit
Ut simul in patriâ conregnet cum grege pastor,
Ut simul æternâ cum Jesu in pace quiescant."

The inscription intimates that this was composed by the subject of it upon his death-bed.

It was late when we reached Guimgamp, and we wandered about the town farther than our fatigue made agreeable before we found the inn. When found, however, it turned out the best we had yet been at in Britanny.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Guimgamp—The Trieux—Extracts from the Account Books of the Town — View of the Town — Walk to "La Tour du Bois de la Roche" — Marriage at Guimgamp — Chapel of Notre Dame de Grace—Grotesque Carvings—La Fontaine de Plomb — Walk to Pontrieux.

Guimgamp is a pretty agreeable little town, cleaner, better built, more airy, and altogether pleasanter than St. Brieuc; though the latter has, as is fitting to its superior rank, the larger population—about ten thousand; while that of Guimgamp is only about six. The three days which we spent there were as agreeably passed as any during our journey, and, if any genuine disciple of "gentle Izaak" — as it is the fashion to call him, with reference, I presume, to his predilection for gentils — wishes for new waters where fish are plenty, and cockneys are unknown, and where he may pass tranquil days amid varied and romantic scenery in the un-

disturbed exercise of his peaceful craft, let him betake himself to Guimgamp.

The swift and clear Trieux passes through the town on its way from the Méné hills to the Channel; and either down the stream as far as Pontrieux or up it, preferably as far as scenery is concerned, to its sources in the hills, several excellent days' fishing may be found. A few miles above Guimgamp the two streams meet, which together form the Trieux, and the valley at that place, and farther on up either rivulet, is delightful.

But my pleasant recollections of our walks in this direction are making me reverse the order of things; for our first attentions were naturally devoted to the town. It has a large church, which, but for the incongruous mixture of the Gothic with the cumbrous deformities of the "renaissance," would be handsome, and, as it is, contains some sufficiently elegant pillars, and one or two very bold arches. There are, also, in this church a multitude of the grotesque heads, which were so favourite an ornament with the architects of the middle ages, placed in a situation in which I do not ever remember to have seen them elsewhere. They protrude from the pillars, not as usual at the point where the arch springs, but from the midst of the

shaft, the beauty and symmetry of which they go far to destroy.

Guimgamp was formerly the capital of the great duchy of Penthiévre — one of the old historical families whose name occurs in almost every page of Breton history. The castle, of which little remains except the site, which is planted with trees, and used by the townsfolk as a promenade, belongs to King Louis Philippe, as heir to the vast property of that family.

There is a curious document preserved among the archives of the town at the Hotel de Ville, giving an account of a survey of the castle made in 1454, by Yves Guerguezengor, "master-mason," as the architects of those days modestly styled themselves. By this it appears that, notwithstanding the apparent solidity of the foundations which remain, "l'ouvrage fut trouvé mal fait." But the most interesting part of the document is the price paid to this master-mason for his survey and opinion. He received two sous and a half, including the cost of a supper, which he was to give to the bourgeois who had assisted in the survey, which amounted to one sous and a half. The sous, however, were of silver, and were worth about two francs each of present currency.

One of the entries, in an old book of the town accounts, preserved in the same place, shows that a "grand souper," given by the seneschal of Guimgamp to the chancellor and commissaries of the duke on the ninth of January, 1484, cost six sous, eight deniers, equal to about thirteen francs, thirty-three centimes, of the present currency.

I felt sure, from the shape of the ground on which the town is built, and from the relative positions of the church, the foundations of the castle, with its fine trees, and the remains which still exist of the town-walls, that a very picturesque sketch of the whole might be made, if one could only find the right point from which to take it. This, after a good deal of wandering about, we at last found to our satisfaction. On the river, which runs close to the foot of the hill, whose top and sides, down to the water's edge, are covered with the town, there is a water-mill and weir. The river at this point is very broad, and, for the convenience of the proprietors of some gardens on the other side, a row of some thirty stepping-stones are placed at intervals of about a yard across the top of the weir. From the farther side of this passage, which, from the great rapidity with which the water runs between the stones, it

made me somewhat giddy to cross, is a point of view which is well worth taking some pains to reach.

In the immediate foreground there is, to the right, the mill with its picturesque accompaniments, the sparkling stream rushing over the weir, and the long line of stepping-stones crossing the river diagonally, over which we will suppose the neat, active figure of a peasant girl to be skipping from stone to stone, with bare feet, while her sabots, ill-adapted for the performance of such an achievement, are carried in one hand, and the other is employed in lifting her carefully-gathered "jupon" high enough to give fair play to a pair of brown and somewhat stout, but yet well made, finely-rounded legs and neatly-turned ancles.

To the left of the foreground, the stream, contracted, deepened, and darkening, runs between a double row of overhanging houses, inhabited by the poorer part of the population, and exhibiting in their construction every conceivable combination of form, and every degree of dilapidation. Immediately opposite to the point at which we stood, the bank of the river was occupied by a row of sheds, beneath which all the washerwomen of the town were plying their noisy vocation.

Then, behind all this, the side of the hill rose covered with the grey-roofed houses of the town, among the never-ending variety of whose gable-ends and sloping tops the changing lights and shadows of a fitful sky seemed to be playing at hide and seek, as they chased each other around the moss-grown chimneys, and each alternately fled as the other pursued into every nook and corner of the multiform mass of buildings. The houses were divided and varied by numerous little gardens, and especially by the fine mass of trees which marked the site of the castle, and drew the eye to a little bit of hoary masonry, that had once been the foot of one of the towers, and a small portion of the town-wall which remains immediately below it. The church, occupying as usual the highest point of the hill, crowned the whole with its motley fabric, whose heterogeneous forms, with their anomalous steeple and ill-matched towers, however they might have been scorned by the scientific taste of a Pugin, would have been duly appreciated, as important features of the landscape, by the picturesque eye of a Prout.

It was decided, in much less time than I have taken in attempting to describe the scene, that as much of its beauty as the

pencil and colour-box could transfer to paper must be carried away with us. So, while my companion produced his ever-ready sketch-book, and prepared to add Guimgamp to his stock of Breton scenery and reminiscences, I started on a farther ramble over "fresh fields and pastures new."

About a league or rather more from the town, there are the remains of an ancient "maison forte," called "La Tour du Bois de la Roche," and this I determined to make the object of my stroll. The people, of whom I inquired the direction of this spot, told me that I must follow the high-road to Brest. Now that was by no means what I wished to do.

But I knew that a Frenchman will always direct you to keep the "grande route," if it be in any way possible to arrive, even by traversing a circuitous distance of twenty miles out of your way, by that means at your destination. He invariably thinks the "grande route" the summum bonum of a traveller's wishes, and considers nothing more "vilain" than a walk across the country. "N'y a t'il pas un chemin de travers?" The answer will be "Mais c'est bien mauvais; vous ne le trouverez pas, c'est bien penible, tandis que vous pouvez marcher toujours sur la grande route," &c.

I therefore contented myself with ascertaining the direction in which "La Tour du Bois de la Roche" was situated, and determined to find my way to it as I could. Though I have no doubt that in this case I might have arrived by the common road at the object of my ramble, with much less both of time and labour than I expected in finding one for myself, yet my walk up and down a succession of undulations, across sundry ravines, and through two or three coppices, was far too pretty to occasion any remorseful regret for the despised "grande route."

In passing up a very narrow and steep lane, which threaded a rather large wood, I saw two carts, one loaded with faggots, and the other empty, meet each other. It was altogether impossible to pass. So he of the empty cart turned his horse directly against the sandy bank of the lane, and then, giving a tremendous crack with his whip, the horse made a spring and fell with his nose in the bushes. The driver did not seem in the least surprised or moved in any way; but, saying "Encore une fois mon ami!" gave another great crack; and, after much struggling on the part of the horse, succeeded in driving his cart among the underwood.

"La Tour du Bois de la Roche" is very

appropriately so called, for it stands on a rocky knoll, in the midst of a large wood. The tower, which remains, is a small part only of the mansion which once stood here, and has not the appearance of any great antiquity. I could not see a soul near the place, which, though apparently habitable, seemed deserted. I knocked at the door of the tower, but, receiving no answer to my summons, I lifted the latch, and found myself in a dark passage, with some stone stairs at the farther end. At the top of these I found another door, at which I again knocked, and was again obliged to open for myself, when, to my surprise, I found myself in a very nicely-kept garden. I still saw nobody, and began to think that I was destined to accomplish some adventure in this deserted castle of the forest, and, therefore, advanced boldly. The garden was extensive, and planted "à l'anglaise," with winding walks and clumps of trees. But a few turns of a prettily serpentining path brought me in sight of an old man tending his flowers, and an enormous dog, placidly sitting beside him. The latter immediately advanced to meet me; and I confess I grasped a little tighter the good crabstick I held in my hand, that I might be ready for peace or war, according to the de-

monstrations of the other party. The old dog, however, having, by a few sniffs, satisfied himself, apparently to his satisfaction, that I was no "mauvais sujet," wagged his tail very hospitably; but the man was not conscious of my approach till I addressed him with many apologies for my intrusion. He then behaved quite as civilly as the dog, and begged I would walk about his garden as long as I liked. I suppose the old gentleman did not altogether live the life of a solitary; indeed his garden betokened the expenditure of more care and labour than one pair of hands could supply. But I left his domain as I entered it, without seeing a single other human being near the silent and very secluded spot.

The next morning, all the population of Guimgamp were on the qui vive, about a marriage which was to take place. The bride's father was a "notaire," who lived in the "place," and the bridegroom was an "avocat," from St. Brieuc. At ten o'clock, every window of every house in the "place" was crowded with heads; groups were collected here and there, in the way by which the happy couple were to pass; and a large crowd of the lower orders had congregated around the door, from which they were expected to issue.

But the lady kept them waiting no little time before she made her appearance. At last, the door opened, the crowd fell back, forming a lane, and forth came the bride, all in white muslin and blushes, leaning on the arm of her father. Then followed several other couples, and, last of all, the bridegroom, leading his intended mother-in-law. In this order they went first to the "mairie," where, to all legal intents and purposes, they were made man and wife. But as little as in England would any union be thought in Britanny to possess of the sanctity or reality of wedlock, or the decency of married life, if unblessed by the priest, or performed otherwise than by and in accordance with the ordinances of the church.

So, as soon as the mayor had taken legal cognizance of the intended marriage, the party proceeded in the same order to the church, whither I had preceded them, intending to witness the ceremony. They all kneeled on chairs, arranged round one of the side altars, with the principal actors in the front. The organ then began to play the overture to the opera of Bagdad, and the priest went on with the service. One of the female guests was dressed in the peasant's costume. Though the lace in her cap was far more abundant

than that exhibited by any of the town ladies, and the quantity of her bijouterie greater, and her toilet altogether quite as costly, yet nothing would have induced her to appear on that, or on any other occasion, in any costume different from that of the "paysannes" of her commune.

When the ceremony was concluded it was about twelve o'clock, and the whole party — the bride being now consigned to the care of her lord — proceeded to the house of a friend, in which a large room had been lent for the purpose of the wedding-feast, the bride's father, as I was told, possessing no room large enough to hold the guests invited, who amounted in number to between one and two hundred. The feast, I was assured, would not conclude before nightfall.

The last morning of our stay at Guimgamp, I spent in a walk to the chapel of Notre Dame de Grace, about a league from the town. This elegant structure was raised in the fourteenth century, by the munificent piety of Charles de Blois, whose devoted attachment to the church was remarkable even in that age of unbounded ecclesiastical ascendency. The most lavish expenditure of wealth, and the greatest profusion of ornamental work, were resorted to, to make this

chapel a thing to wonder at, even in those high and palmy days of ecclesiastical magnificence and architectural perfection. It has, of course, suffered much, and, indeed, little more than the framework of what it was remains. But its elegant spire, finely-proportioned pillars, and light arches, are still worthy of admiration; and a very large quantity of the grotesque carving which formed the cornices of the nave and aisles may still be seen.

Some of the subjects of these carvings are extremely strange. For instance, one would hardly have expected to find, among the works of so pious a prince as Charles de Blois, a representation of the devil drawing after him to a certain place a whole cart-load of fat monks; although, as M. de Freminville remarks, "ces caricatures ridicules contre les moines et le clergé se rencontrent plus fréquemment qu'on ne pourrait le croire sur nos églises du moyen âge."

I must not forget to mention, before bidding adieu to Guimgamp, a very curious specimen of middle-age workmanship which exists there, and is an object of much pride and glory to the inhabitants. It is a fountain in the middle of the place, called, from the material of which it is constructed, "la fontaine

de plomb." It consists of three circular basins of different sizes, placed one above another; on the edge of the lower of which are several sea-horses, whose wings support the second. The third is supported by the figures of Naiads; and the whole is entirely formed of lead. It is a work of the fifteenth century; and the elegance of the conception, and correctness and delicacy of the execution, are such as lead to its being attributed to some one of those Italian artists, so many of whom came to France about that period. It is certain that the arts of design had not at that period arrived at such a degree of excellence in Britanny, as to make it at all probable that this elegant Fontaine de Plomb should have been the production of a native artist.

It was two o'clock in the afternoon when we left Guimgamp, not a very judiciously chosen hour for starting on a long walk; but we intended only to reach Pontrieux, a town about four leagues to the northward; and, as there seemed nothing more to detain us at Guimgamp, we did not like to put the afternoon to no profit.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Peasant's Funeral—Châteaulin—Le Temple de Lanleff—Different Opinions respecting its Origin—Difficulty of obtaining Breakfast—Arrival at Paimpol—Position of the Town—Sea Views in the Neighbourhood—Old "Manoirs"—"Droite de Motte"—"Place du Martroy."

THE road from Guimgamp to Pontrieux follows with some deviations the course of the river, and is extremely pretty whenever it comes near enough to afford a peep at it. The stream runs in an almost continuous succession of rapids, and the valley, like most of those in the department, is rocky. A little before arriving at our journey's end, we met a considerable number of men and women on horseback coming from a funeral. He who appeared to be the chief mourner was enveloped in a long black cloak, but the rest of the party had made no alteration in their usual costume. Many of the women rode *astride; some on pillions behind the men.*

It was near five o'clock when we reached

Pontrieux — the bridge over the Trieux — a town of about sixteen hundred inhabitants, built on both sides of the river from which it takes its name. It is a well-built little town, and we found tolerably good quarters in a very large old house, where we both slept in the same room, which was about twenty-five feet square. Before going to bed we walked to the site of an old castle, which overlooks the town. It was called Châteaulin, and was built to command the passage of the river. In the twelfth century we find a bishop taking it by assault. Hervé, Viscount of Leon, and Guiomark, his son, fell into an ambuscade set for them by the Viscount of Faou, who imprisoned them in this castle. But a very short time elapsed before Hamon, Bishop of Leon, made his appearance before Châteaulin ; and the tables were soon turned. For his reverence took the place by assault, delivered the captives, and sent off the Viscount of Faou and his men to his dungeons at Daoulas, where he thought fit to let them perish by famine, just by way of a hint to others, to teach them what it was to offend the Bishop of Leon. The remains of Châteaulin, which was finally destroyed by Pierre de Rohan in the fifteenth century, who at the same time took and sacked the town, are very

trifling; but the position must have been a fine one.

The next morning we left Pontrieux with the intention of sleeping at Paimpol, a town on the coast, about three leagues farther north. But, instead of pursuing the road, we intended to take a very circuitous route for the sake of visiting one of the most remarkable monuments in the country—"Le temple de Lanleff."

The edifice so called exists about three leagues to the eastward of Pontrieux, on the banks of the little river Leff, which falls into the Trieux, a few miles below the bridge. We found our way thither with some difficulty, and not before we had wandered over a good deal more than the necessary distance. The country we traversed was in no way remarkable, till we reached the narrow valley through which the Leff winds its sinuous course. Almost all the valleys which seam the surface of this department partake, in a degree more or less striking, of the same picturesque character. The streams are generally rapid, and their courses more or less rocky. Indeed, through the whole of Britanny generally, the rocky framework of the country pierces through its integument of soil more frequently than in any other part of the world, that I

have seen. The rock appears to be never very far from the surface, and the action of a rapid stream soon makes it visible.

We followed the course of the Leff for a little way, and then, having once reached the hamlet of Lanleff — the field of the Leff, that is—we soon found the object of our excursion. Adjoining the very small and modern church of the village, there is a round building, formed of two concentric circles of stone wall. The diameter of the inner of these circles is about thirty-three feet, the distance between the inner and the outer wall nine feet. Each of the walls is about three feet thick. A part of the exterior wall, about a third of the whole circumference perhaps, has totally perished. The inner one is pierced by twelve doorways, with circular arched tops, and twelve windows, corresponding with them in position, existed in the outer wall. The arch of each of the doors is supported on either side by columns, whose capitals were adorned with rude carving of some sort. Some of the numerous antiquaries, who have seen and written on the temple of Lanleff, maintain that the capitals of almost all the columns were adorned with rams' heads; but I confess that the greater number appeared to me to be far too much obliterated to permit any

judgment to be formed as to what the carving may have been intended to represent. On a few only I thought I could trace something like the figure of a ram's head and horns. In the wall, exactly to the east, there is a circular aperture, the diameter of which, on the outside, is about a foot, but which increases gradually towards the interior, so that, on that side, its diameter is about three feet. The whole building is of the granite of the country, laid in courses of small stones, cemented with a mortar of chalk and sand, so hard as, in some places, apparently to have proved a more enduring material than the stone itself. In the middle of the enclosed area, which for many years has been used as the cemetery of the village, there is a large and evidently very old yew tree, whose branches, spreading beyond the circuit of the walls, overshadow the whole edifice.

Such is "le temple de Lanleff" as it now appears; and, with this matter-of-fact description of what all may see, ends all that can be said with any degree of certainty upon the subject. It is altogether unique in its form and details, and presents no analogy to any other building known to exist in Britanny, or, I believe, in any other country of Europe. . .

It has for many years, therefore, been a fertile theme for the discussions of the antiquaries, most of whom have arrived, through the devious mazes of a vast quantity of erudition, at different conclusions respecting its date and destination. It has served, indeed, the tyro antiquaries of the province very much in the same manner and to the same purpose as the great cause of Peebles versus Plainstains served the young advocates of Edinborough—as a sort of essay piece; a question on which they might try their prowess and shew their learning, but which no amount of genius or ignorance could either clear up, or plunge in more profound obscurity than it is at present.

The opinions, which seem to be the most general and the least improbable, may be reduced to these four: first, that it was a druidical temple, consecrated to the worship of the sun; secondly, that it was a Roman temple; thirdly, a baptistry of the early Christians; and, fourthly, a church built by the Templars in imitation of some of the buildings which they had seen in Palestine.

M. de Freminville, who is a warm supporter, on this as on all other occasions, of the claims of the Celts, founds his opinion on the rudeness of the architecture, and its ap-

pearance of great antiquity, and on the form and arrangement of the building, which, with its twelve doors, &c., would seem to have been intended to typify some of the objects of astronomical worship. On some of the capitals, too, of the pillars, he thinks he can trace representations of the disc of the sun. He lays great stress also on the remarkable aperture to the east before mentioned. This, he thinks, if not on sufficient grounds to carry conviction with them, yet, at all events, with much poetry of imagination, was destined for the passage of the rays of the rising sun at a certain moment. The people assembled in the building would wait to commence their worship till the sacred light which flowed from the ascending orb of the divinity streamed in upon the altar, and declared the presence of their God.

At the same time that he attributes this ancient building to the Druids, M. de Freminville admits that their original places of worship were the recesses of groves, and their altars the brute stones which we yet see, with no other covering than the vault of heaven. But he thinks that, after the period of the Roman conquest, they abandoned their rude altars and their holy groves, and built temples to their divinities in imitation of the

forms of those of their conquerors. I confess that to me this seems extremely improbable. In the first place, if such were the case, how is it that we do not see other similar temples? In the next place, all that we know of the nature of their religion itself would tend to show that it would lose its most marked features, and become entirely changed in spirit, as well as in form, if transferred from its mysterious groves and gloomy solitudes to the interior of a building. And again, the known genius and character of the people, so averse to change in all respects, but most especially so in every thing that touches their devotional feelings, would be little likely to approve or tolerate an innovation in their religious system, which would operate so entire a revolution in that theology which taught them that God was too great to be enclosed within the walls of a temple.

The second hypothesis, which attributes to this mysterious building a Roman origin, appears to me the most unfortunate of all; inasmuch as I think the only thing that can be pronounced with any degree of certainty respecting it is, that it never was the work of Roman builders. There is not a brick in it; and all the invariable marks of Roman architecture are absent.

Those who will have it to be a baptistry are, of course, led to that opinion by the form, and by the likelihood that, if it belonged to any much later period, we should be able to find some trace of it among the records and titles relating to the district.

I cannot but think, nevertheless, that the last opinion — painful as it must be to the feelings of an antiquary to knock off, at one fell swoop, seven or eight hundred years from the age of a building — is the most probable. Besides the reasons stated above for thinking this possible, there is another evidence, which is to my mind almost the strongest that could be adduced as to its origin, short of any specific record; and that is the universal and never-varying opinion of the peasants in the neighbourhood. In answer to all inquiries, they uniformly declare that it was built by "les moines rouges," the appellation which they always give to the Templars, from the red cross which they wore on their white robe. In a country like Britanny, where so many traditions of undoubted truth and correctness have been preserved through successive generations for centuries, and where the oral history of the neighbourhood is passed from father to son, in every family in the country, the popular belief is testimony of the highest

character. I should feel much difficulty in discrediting a statement so supported, even if in itself improbable. But, where immemorial tradition and probability are on the same side, I own that the evidence appears to me conclusive.

The little edifice, which has been built against the older edifice, in such a manner that the latter serves, as it were, for a vestibule through which the other is entered, is, I think, the smallest church I ever saw. The sole ornaments on the altar, besides the crucifix, consisted of two pots of well known aspect, bearing each the inscription, "Moutarde de fines herbes de Paris," and filled with wild flowers.

Our antiquarian researches, by the time they were concluded, had given us an appetite, which the village had no means of satisfying. Not a drop of milk could be found. We frequently had a good deal of difficulty in procuring as much milk as we liked; and this, paradoxically as it seems, would, I take it, always be the case in a dairy-country, like Britanny. If you chance, indeed, to come just at the right moment, you may have as much milk as you please; but, where the principal and most valuable part of the produce of the farm is butter, the good wife will

not, for any trifling remuneration, disturb her pans, in which the rich cream has already begun to impart a deeper hue to the surface of the morning's "meal."

The nearest "bourg," at which there was any chance of food, was St. Jacques, and thither, therefore, though in exactly a contrary direction to Paimpol, we made the best of our way. But what was our dismay at finding, when we arrived there, that there was literally nothing to be had but a little black bread, which, hungry as we were, we could not swallow! It was now half-past nine o'clock. We had left Pontrieux at five, and had been afoot ever since, and were now more than three leagues from Paimpol, the nearest place at which we could be sure of obtaining any thing to eat.

This was not agreeable; but we turned round manfully, and stepped along over the hills, to all outward seeming as vigorously as if we had refreshed nature with the food she ceased not to cry for. It was nearly twelve o'clock when we reached Paimpol, in a state very nearly approaching starvation. We found the people just going to dinner, and I am afraid that mine host of "La grande maison" at Paimpol did not derive any considerable portion of profit from the two

francs each that we paid for the viands we consumed at his table.

Paimpol is all but an island, and, before the present causeway was constructed on the neck of land which unites it to the continent, it was frequently quite so at the periods of high tides, to the great inconvenience of the inhabitants both of the town and neighbouring communes. Accidents happened not unfrequently, and many lives, both of men and cattle, were lost from time to time. This, however, has been remedied; and the active spirit of improvement, which I have before noticed, was busy when I was at Paimpol, in making farther ameliorations in the quays and port. The little town is a very considerable fishing station, and has some foreign commerce besides. I saw a timber ship from Norway unloading her cargo.

Paimpol itself is not particularly interesting in any way; but it served us as head-quarters, while we made several excursions in the surrounding country.

To those who can find beauty enough to delight the eye, and variety enough to afford food for observation and amusement in a mere sea view, there is much in the neighbourhood of Paimpol worth visiting. The form of the bay is pretty; and the shape of the adjoining

coast is peculiarly favourable to picturesque effect, headland after headland jutting out, so as to form a succession of distances as far as the eye can reach. The little island of St. Riom, together with another islet in the entrance of the bay, and, farther out, the long low line of rich-coloured rocks, which form the Isle of Bréhat, are also additional sources of landscape beauty. The cliffs are nowhere of any great height, but the rocks are, for the most part, remarkable for a rich variety of colouring and picturesque form.

On the highest point of one of the downs, a mile or two from Paimpol, there is on an ornamented pedestal, some eight or ten feet high, a figure of the Virgin, which serves as a landmark from a great distance out at sea; and from this point the seaward prospect is magnificent; especially if a score or so of white-sailed fishing-boats, with the sun glancing on their canvass and on the face of the water, are flitting in and out among the bays and headlands of the coast, as was the case when I spent a delightful hour in gazing on the wide-spread picture.

During our walks in this neighbourhood, we saw a great number of dwellings, now merely farm-houses, but which were formerly the residences of the good knights and gen-

tlemen who, upon so many trying occasions, made the Breton chivalry a most important portion of the force of France. These had, of course, lost some more, some less, of their original appearance; but all were distinguished by the massive stone gateway, with its round arch, and small foot-entrance at the side, cut in the stout wall which surrounded the house, and helped to make every man's dwelling a stronghold.

Necessary as such precautions were in every country of Europe during the early part of the middle ages, they were most especially so on this wild and remote coast. Never could any man there lay his head upon his pillow without a great probability of being waked by the attack of a gang of Norman pirates. The whole of this district was for a long series of years perpetually ravaged by these rovers, who slowly and reluctantly abandoned the habits of sea adventure which they had brought with them from their northern homes, and which they considered the most honourable as well as most agreeable mode of obtaining their subsistence.

In one of our excursions, we found, not very far to the south of Paimpol, one of those evidently artificial mounds, which so often mark the spot where a Celtic chief lies buried. The

tradition of the country, however, assigns a different origin to this. Though in its appearance there is nothing to distinguish it from the mounds, which are considered sepulchral, it is said that this is what was called a "droit de motte." There was a seignorial right, which dated from the earliest period of feodality, by virtue of which a lord, whose manor was so situated that it could not be all looked over from any natural elevation, might require his vassals to bring to a stated spot a sufficient number of cart-loads of earth to form a mound or "motte," from which all the extent of his possessions might be seen. At this "motte" were held the lord's courts, and there the tenants came to pay their feodal dues. "Enfin," says Freminville, "ces mottes étaient le chef-lieu du fief principal; aussi l'on trouve dans des très-anciens actes, que tel arrière-fief, tel bois, tel moulin, etc. relevait de la motte de tel endroit, pour signifier qu'il dépendait du seigneur de ce lieu."

It struck me that this practice would be much more to the purpose in such a country as Flanders than here, where scarcely a hundred acres of level ground can be found together in the department.

We walked home along the beach of the bay, which is in one part shaded by a planta-

tion of oaks that flourish almost close to the water's edge; then by the quay, where sundry boats were unloading their spoil, and so to our inn in the "Place du Martroy," a name which recurs in many of the towns of France, and which, in all probability, marks the spot where, in the various persecutions of the early church, the sufferers earned their crown of martyrdom.

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